VALLEY VOICE

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State Officials Poised For Prison Overcrowding Ruling

DAVID MARSH

Lawyers for Gov. Jerry Brown scored a rare legal victory, albeit a small one, in the state's long-running battle with federal judges over prison overcrowding when a panel of three federal judges agreed to a brief postponement of a looming Dec. 31 deadline for the state. The panel issued a wide-ranging order calling for state officials and inmate attorneys to meet and seek a long term resolution of the problem.

The judges postponed until Jan. 27 their previous order that the state release approximately 8,000 prisoners by Dec. 31 or face harsh sanctions for contempt of court.

The postponement is seen by some as an indication from the court of a possible willingness to compromise in an effort to find a permanent solution to the problem, but falls far short of the three-year postponement requested by lawyers for Brown in a Sept. 16 filing with the court. Brown has said a potential three-year extension would give the state enough time to invest in evidence-based programming intended to bring down the state's recidivism rate and break the cycle of inmates returning to prison again and again.

The order also instructed inmate attorneys to immediately begin discussions with the state's attorneys regarding the merits of Brown's request for a three-year postponement in order to explore practical alternatives that would avoid the early release of thousands of felons. The panel of judges appointed Justice Peter J. Siggins of the 1st District Court of Appeal to monitor the informal discussions and report back to the court by Oct. 21 with his recommendations.

In an apparent effort to thwart the state's efforts to address the problem through short-term fixes, the judges' order also addressed Brown's latest proposed last-ditch plan to address the problem by shipping thousands of inmates to private facilities in other states. Their order forbids the state from entering into "any contracts or other arrangement to lease additional capacity in out-of-state facilities or otherwise increase the number of inmates who are housed in out-of-state facilities."

Shifting thousands of California inmates to private lockups in prisons often thousands of miles away from their families was an expensive option exercised under an "emergency decree" by Brown's predecessor, former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The number of California's displaced felons housed in such states as Tennessee, Oklahoma, Arizona and Mississippi eventually reached 9,000.

In an effort to cut costs from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's annual $9.1 billion budget, Brown earlier this year cancelled several ongoing contracts the state had made with two of the largest companies in the rapidly growing private prison industry, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA} and the Geo Group, and soon began shipping hundreds of the inmates it has housed in other states back to the already heavily overpopulated prisons within California.

Since assuming the governor's office, Brown has continued the battle to resist the ongoing federal control over healthcare in the state's massive 32-prison system.

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Porterville Council Member Pete McCracken, Mayor Cameron Hamilton and Councilmember Greg Shelton. Photo by Tony Maldonado

Porterville Looks Forward After Proclamation Debate

TONY MALDONADO

Following the last few months of controversy, Porterville's City Council and those in its LGBT community are looking ahead to the future.

Proclamation Debate and Controversy

Beginning in June, the council placed itself in the middle of considerable controversy over its LGBT Pride Month proclamation and the actions following it.

In June, then-mayor Virginia Gurrola signed the proclamation and presented it to Brock Neeley, the man requesting it; Neeley and his husband, John Coffee, were the first same-sex couple to marry in Tulare County.

The events that followed through the June, July and August meetings, would see the proclamation repealed, the process for proclamations changed, a protest inside the council chambers and photos, videos and the entire story amplified throughout social media and the traditional press – stories were published/broadcast in the *New York Times, Sacramento Bee*, *The Atlantic*, MSNBC and the *Huffington Post.*

The opinion pages of the local newspaper, the *Porterville Recorder,* were alight with letters to the editor from both sides; the conversations in its Facebook comments were even more active.

The story seemingly spread worldwide -- for many outside of the state, or even the Valley, it would be the first time they would hear of Porterville.

Rescission and Replacement

The proclamation was rescinded and replaced with a "goodwill to all" resolution during the council's meeting on July 16, on a 3-2 vote; Council Members Greg Shelton, Brian Ward and Cameron Hamilton for, and Mayor Virginia Gurrola and Vice-Mayor Pete McCracken dissenting.

"I could not vote no on rescission and yes on the resolution. I was forced to vote yes to rescind [the LGBT proclamation] and issue [the new resolution] or no against rescission," McCracken told the *Voice*. "Because they were tied together, I had to vote no on the replacement resolution."

Immediately following the vote, the meeting was called to recess after three were arrested for interrupting the meeting, shouting "Shame on you!" to the council and waving protest signs.

"The resolution that took its place was exactly what they're asking for: inclusion. And they were livid that it would be replaced with something other than the resolution that spoke to them as an LGBT community, which is separate of the rest of the community," Hamilton said.

Changes to Proclamation Process

At the same meeting, the council also voted along the same 3-2 lines to change the way that proclamations are reviewed and granted.

The new process requires a council member to sponsor it and the approval

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Warren Gubler Throws Hat In Ring for Second Council Term

STAFF REPORTS

In 2009, Warren Gubler, along with nine other challengers, ran for one of three contested Visalia City Council seats. In that year of discontent, the three incumbents were not re-elected, and Gubler, in his first term, brought a business-friendly, tax-hostile approach to the city council. Consider, in a nutshell, that in excess of 700,000 square feet of retail space has been added to Mooney Boulevard, and that the city, even throughout this protracted recession, has retained $2 million in surplus funds. This, in part, is what Gubler refers to with his campaign slogan that "Visalia is better off than four years ago."

"In my college days I remember watching the Reagan/Carter debates," Gubler said. "I remember the conclusion to one debate the Gipper asked are you better off now than you were four years ago? What he was implying was

City Council Member Steve Nelsen

it was time for a change. I'd like to take that slogan and turn it around and say Visalia is better off than four years ago."

Gubler has voted for no new taxes.

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Valley Voice and Clay Café to Host Candidate Meet and Greet

Come meet the Visalia City Council candidates October 22nd from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Clay Café. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be served. The setting is informal so that Visalia citizens can ask the candidates about issues that concern them. Five candidates will be vying for three vacant seats. Michael Brown and Vincent Salinas are non-incumbents. Come meet them and the other candidates. Join us to learn more about our city and its future leaders.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

This Isn't America — Or Is It?

Now that the Tea Party has taken its ball and gone home, leaving the government of the United States in shutdown, we sadly must all admit that, while awful, this closure is far from the worst thing to befall us. OK--perhaps "befall" is inaccurate, in that it implies something happening to us, when in reality this whole farce is self-inflicted. It is a strike, simply, by a childish minority in the House which refuses to accept that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has three times carried the day: Congress did pass it, after all, the Supreme Court upheld it, and the president was re-elected. The time for discussing it has passed. I suspect what really stirs the Tea Party hearts is how lamentably they have failed. Not only will the ACA wade forward into our collective mindset, it will become as accepted and successful as Social Security. And from the start these people thought to slur the President's efforts by referring to the ACA as Obamacare--as if some Kenyan socialist was meddling with the world's best health care system. Just think if the Republicans of a couple of generations ago were as short-sighted as these we're presently saddled with. We wouldn't have Social Security--we'd have, after FDR, something like Roosecurity: a popular program that, if nothing else, would serve to further FDR's name in history. They should let it go.

Not so the debt ceiling, which we are set to hit the day this paper comes out. It verges on the treasonous that we are, without a resolution to raise it, yet again so perilously close to default. The last time we toyed with not upping our debt limit, in 2011, the result was a downgrade of our credit rating for the first time in this country's history and a cost to the taxpayer of an estimated $1.3 billion in increased interest. Of course, we did raise the ceiling, but in approaching it so closely the damage was done. Again, self-inflicted. And this from the party that has traditionally billed itself as that of fiscal responsibility!

This isn't America--or is it? Is this what we've become?

Are we the globe-leading superpower, which after World War II imposed a pax Americana on a broken world, or are we 300 million hostages to some fifty-odd House crackpots? Yet it's not merely our own citizenry in the balance: Where is the "full faith and credit" of the United Sates if it defaults, and where does that leave the global economy?

This is the handgrenade that the Tea Party has rolled under the dinner table. Yes, it's a huge problem for every economy, and ours in particular, but it may be an extinction event for the Republicans--who are predominantly blamed for the current impasse. In failing to reign in the Tea Party, the Republicans have become controlled by them--and now, with Congress enjoying an historically low 13% approval rating, the future of the right in this country looks to be fracturing. I see a more traditional, if toothless, Republican minority hedged in Congress by Tea Party ideology on one side and by a Democratic majority on the other.

This is how the 2014 mid-term elections look to me: The Republicans will be routed. They are dragging behind them a legacy of blackmail and obstruction which has finally, with this federal government shut down and looming debt crisis, showed itself to be untenable and will likely cause the U.S. taxpayer billions. It's incalculable what it will cost the world as a whole. Picture it like this. If you took a long road trip with a group of friends, only one of whom was allowed to drive, and this friend had to stop every five miles to legislate your route, he'd be out of the car before the car got out of the county.

It's time to throw the Tea Party out of the car.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Notebook

CATHERINE DOE

DEVIN NUNES NOT FAR ENOUGH TO THE RIGHT

Last week Rep. Devin Nunes was accused of being a "sellout" and "RINO" (Republican in name only) for opposing the government shutdown. It all started when he called the Republican hardliners "lemmings with suicide vests," which does evoke a pretty funny visual. But that's what started the mud-slinging, which along with the drinking, seems to be in high volume on the Republican House floor lately.

He would not identify the handful of members he considers to be in the "lemming caucus," but said they are about two dozen House Republicans who say "no on everything." Nunes does identify Sen. Ted Cruz as "the one that got us into this mess." Nunes was one of the first Republicans to comprehend the consequences of forcing the shutdown. "I tried everything I could to steer us against this strategy," Nunes said on October 4th, "It's going to end badly for some in my party."

His words proved prophetic as the Republican Party has since been badly damaged by the government shutdown and debt limit standoff. An October 12th NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll found that a majority of Americans blame the GOP by 53 percent to the Democrats 31 percent. This is a wider margin of blame than the Republicans received during the 1995/1996 shutdown. Seventy percent of the respondents also said congressional Republicans are putting politics first. And to put the final nail in the caucus' coffin, favorability for Obamacare has risen as a result of the shutdown, making Ted Cruz the best thing to happen to the Affordable Health Care Act since the Supreme Court ruled in its favor.

Nunes supports the National Chamber of Commerce's saying that the government shutdown is destroying businesses. Since when does a Republican get a smack down for being pro-business?

What the GOP doesn't realize is how anti-business the Tea Party actually is. Many of them feel like the government and "big business" are colluding against the average American. "This marriage is called fascism. When Big Gov and Big Biz climb in bed together we all get screwed," said a member of the Tea Party Patriots. Thus, in their mind, shutting down the government puts an end to the conspiracy.

Rep. Nunes put out this message to his constituents on October 6th, "I wanted to share my views with you on the government shutdown. I strongly oppose ObamaCare, and I have voted to repeal or defund it around 40 times. I also have argued that the Republicans' current political strategy would result in a government shutdown but would not succeed in dismantling ObamaCare – essentially the worst of both worlds."

Yet, the tone/stone deaf Tea Party insists Nunes will get primaried in the next election by a real conservative. Do they have their heads somewhere I can't mention? This is California, not Oklahoma.

The bottom line is that on serious issues of national concern, Nunes is going to do what is best for our country first, Tulare County next, and his party last--what the Tea Party calls a capital offense.

TWO CONTENDERS RUNNING FOR TULARE COUNTY SHERIFF

David Whaley, a former undersheriff who retired four years ago, is running for Tulare County Sheriff in 2014. He has 34 years experience at the department and is currently serving on the Tulare County Fair Board to which he was appointed by the governor. Whaley said he started as a cadet at age 18 and worked all divisions. "I grew up there," he said. "I love the department." He had a booth at the Tulare County Fair and has already had two meet-and-greets, one in Tulare and one in Porterville.

Bill Wittman, the current Tulare County Sheriff, is taking a medical leave of absence and will not seek re-election. Wittman has served as Tulare County Sheriff since 1995.

Undersheriff Mike Boudreaux has succeeded Wittman as acting sheriff and is also seeking election as sheriff.

Capt. Mike Boudreaux had just become the number-two person at the Tulare County Sheriff's Department on January 9th of this year, and did not expect to become acting sheriff ten months later. He has worked at the department for 27 years and is the son of a sheriff's detective. Boudreaux grew up in the areas of California Hot Springs and Porterville.

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors officially appointed Boudreaux acting Sheriff on October 8th. Many of his fellow officers were in the chamber to support his appointment. Supervisor Ennis recalled "all the confidence Wittman had in him, and I believe the same. I'm very proud to see you in this position."

"I feel like I represent the future," Boudreaux said. "I'm starting to receive tremendous support from the men and women of this department."

JOHN HERNANDEZ TO RUN FOR THE 21ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

One more Democrat has stepped forward to challenge Rep. David Valadao for his 21st Congressional District seat. Last week, Woodlake native Amanda Renteria launched her campaign against incumbent Valadao. This week, it was Fresno Democrat John Hernandez who officially kicked off his campaign with events in Bakersfield and Sanger. This will be the second time Hernandez will challenge Valadao, to whom he lost by fifteen points in November 2012.

Even though the district is, according to the census bureau, 73 percent Hispanic, there has never been an Hispanic elected to this congressional seat. The three contenders will square off in June of 2014 in an open primary. The two with the most votes, regardless of party, will go on to the general election in November.

Hernandez is a 1996 graduate of Fresno State. He is currently the chief executive officer of the Central California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, which is one of the oldest and largest Hispanic chambers in the state of California.

ONE LAST WORD ON THE GOVERNMENT SHUT DOWN

Anybody else have a problem with the Koch brothers being the deep pockets behind the government shutdown? Using the Tea Party to shut down the government in order to defund the Affordable Care Act has been their goal since Obama was re-elected. They haven't personally come out against Obamacare. They are just the check book behind the organizations working to repeal it.

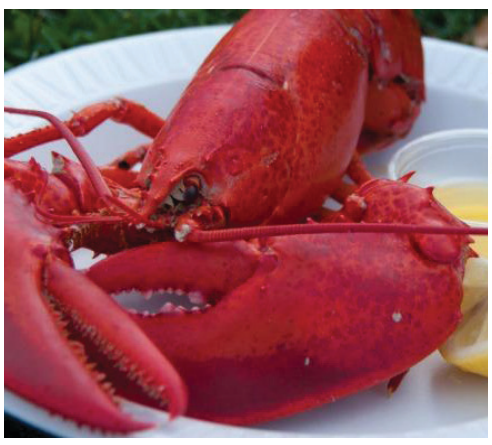
This small homogenous group in congress working against the Affordable Care Act have not just one, but several doctors' and specialists' numbers on speed dial, while those who are underinsured couldn't get a doctor on the phone if their life depended on it. And often it does.

I know a local woman who is fighting for her life against ovarian cancer. Her husband lost his job and benefits a year ago. Do you think the Koch brothers' wives, daughters or granddaughters would have to wait four weeks to get an operation after being diagnosed with ovarian cancer?

The government shutdown, in general, is wreaking havoc on small businesses and the average American citizen's finances. Is anyone in the Republican Party not going to be able to pay their mortgage because of the shutdown? I think not.

Tom Graves, whose Defund Obamacare Act, set the stage for the government shutdown, is a freshman congressman from North Carolina. In Graves' district, which is 85 percent White, only 16.6 percent have a college degree--and that is not atypical for this pack of legislators who manufactured this shutdown.

So they say Obamacare won't work. Maybe so. Then instead of shutting down the government, why doesn't the Tea Party caucus, which is holding our country, and the world, hostage, come up with a plan where seeing a doctor is a human right, you know – like the rest of the developed world?



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Big Stump Entrance to Kings Canyon National Park shows impact of the government shutdown.

Government Shutdown Closes Sequoia and Kings Canyon Parks

STAFF REPORTS

Because the shutdown of the federal government caused a lapse in appropriations, the National Park Service (NPS) has closed all 401 national parks, including Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. All visitor facilities including visitor centers, park hotels, campgrounds and roads are closed. The park will remain closed until the government reopens.

Woody Smeck, superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, gave park visitors in all overnight campgrounds and lodges until 3 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on October 3 to make travel arrangements and leave the parks. In addition, all park programs and special events have been canceled.

Chambers of commerce throughout Tulare County, along with the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau, have been responding to inquiries from tourists whose travel plans are being affected by the closures.

"We sympathize with our visitors who now have to change plans at the last minute," said Visalia Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Glenn Morris. "What we hope they discover, though, is that there is still a lot to do in the area and they can still experience the beauty and wonder of our area."

While access is barred into the Sequoia National Park itself, many areas are still accessible in the Sequoia National Forest. Visitors can still camp on National Forest lands with limited facilities available. They can also hunt, hike, and if they have a fuelwood permit issued prior to October 1, they can cut firewood in areas allowed according to their permit.

For those wishing to visit the Giant Sequoia trees, options are still available. Balch Park, above Springville, is still open and is home to many Giant Sequoia groves, including the Methuselah Tree, and offers visitors fishing, swimming, picnicking and hiking. Balch Park is also easily accessible by tour buses and private automobiles.

Belknap Grove is another destination affording visitors many opportunities to enjoy these unique trees. Belknap is made up of three smaller groves and is accessible on the Nelson Trail from either Camp Nelson or the Quaking Aspen area. Here visitors can enjoy trails through old-growth sequoias that travel along Bear Creek and the Tule River. Lodging is also available in nearby communities for those not wishing to camp in areas with no amenities.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks host 3,900 visitors on average each day in October, and nationally, more than 715,000 visitors a day frequent the National Park System. Nationwide, the NPS stands to lose approximately $450,000 per day in lost revenue from fees collected at entry stations and fees paid for in-park activities such as cave tours, boat rides and camping. Gateway communities across the country see about $76 million per day in total sales from visitor spending that is lost during a government shutdown. Visitors spend approximately $121,892,000 a year in the communities around Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

In Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, 284 employees are now on furlough because of the shutdown. A total of 63 employees remain on duty, however, providing security and emergency services.

Nationwide, the shutdown has also furloughed more than 20,000 National Park Service employees, with approximately 3,000 employees remaining on duty to ensure health, safety and security functions at parks and facilities. About 12,000 park concessions employees are also affected.

Because it will not be maintained, the National Park Service website will be down for the duration of the shutdown. NPS.gov has more than 750,000 pages and 91 million unique visitors each year.

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Garden to Honor Pete Giotta's Lifetime of Achievements

DAVID MARSH

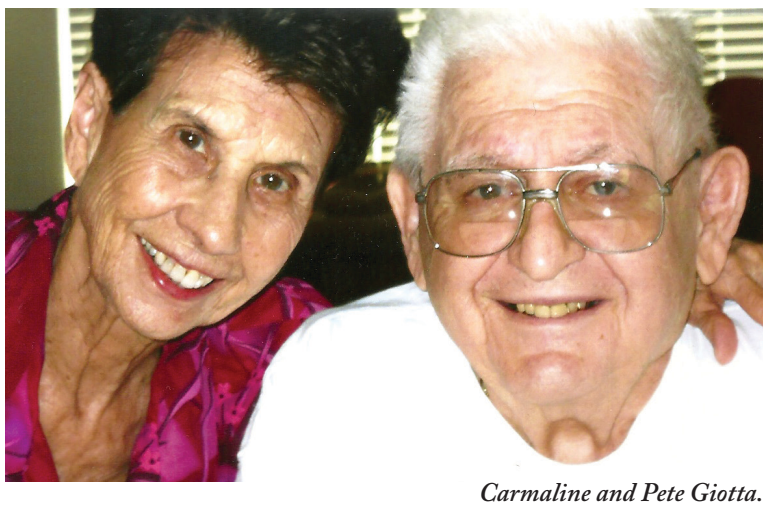
The members of Visalia's Enrico Caruso Lodge of the Sons of Italy will be hosting an open-invitation ceremony at the lodge Sunday, October 20, renaming the garden area at the lodge to honor the outstanding lifetime achievements of Visalia native Pete Giotta. The featured speaker for the event is Visalia Mayor Amy Shuklian.

Giotta, 83, now retired, was a powerful voice in Visalia's business community for over 50 years and served for 16 years as lodge president for the Italian/American fraternal organization. As lodge president, Giotta created an activities program that featured regular dances, seasonal parties and special dinners, all open to the general public, and intended to raise awareness and interest in the lodge among members of the city's large Italian/American community.

Giotta's efforts and tireless energy paid off as the lodge set off on an extended period of rapidly expanding membership rolls which saw membership in the lodge peak out at a little over 700 members and making it the largest Sons of Italy lodge in the entire country.

After serving in the Korean War, Giotta returned to Tulare County and married his long-time girlfriend, the former Carmaline Toledo of Tipton. He formed a business partnership with his older brother, Vito, who had started a grocery store in Ivanhoe which he called Sav Mor Market. The Giotta's worked well together, expanded the store to 18,000 square feet and soon introduced self-serve gas pumps to Tulare County for the first time.

As lodge president, Pete convinced the lodge membership that they needed a much larger facility which could be built by utilizing the skills of the members themselves. Giotta solicited donations of materials from the community, worked tirelessly both day and night on the new building, and even donated to the lodge his one-third ownership of the land chosen for the new lodge. The project was completed in a year, stood four times larger than the former lodge, and the total cost was one-fourth of the cost for a comparable building.



Carmaline and Pete Giotta.

Giotta's most high profile business undertaking in the community was the highly successful chain of "Git 'n Go" convenience stores he developed from scratch during the 1960s. Pete installed managers in the stores who followed a plan developed by Giotta that was designed to enable them in becoming the very grateful owners of the store they managed. Soon there were several Git 'n Go stores in Tulare, a couple in Farmersville and one in Exeter to go with the six or seven already open in Visalia.

"Pete is about the most kind, generous and gentle man you are ever likely to meet," said Steve Luisi. Luisi, who has known Giotta since 1956, was installed as the manager of Steve's Git 'n Go at the corner of Walnut and Giddings avenues, and soon went on to own the business that still bears his name.

Giotta invested in open land around the city; land on which he developed the Key West Shopping Center at the corner of Akers and Golden streets. He was a partner in the development of the many homes and apartments which surround the commercial center which is anchored by a Save Mart store.

For those planning to attend the ceremony which will begin in the garden area at 12:00 p.m. on the 20th, the ceremony will be followed by a luncheon inside the lodge at 1:00 p.m. The Sons of Italy Hall is located at 4211 West Goshen Avenue. The ceremony and luncheon are open and free to the public.

I believe in the community's health, safety, and economic vitality, as it contributes to the overall Quality of Life to Visalia.

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Visalia City Council Candidates Show Their Stripes

CATHERINE DOE

No striking differences separated the group of five men running for Visalia City Council during the two voter forums last week put on by the Chamber of Commerce and the League of Women Voters (LWV), respectively. Both forums allowed for audience questions, and during the chamber event, the candidates were asked what makes them different.

Candidate Vincent Salinas started off the discussion by saying that he participates in the community and listens. Citing one city council meeting when Council Member Greg Collins was the lone vote against a request for rezoning, Salinas said he doesn't like it when a developer follows all the rules laid out by the council then gets voted down on their project. He said those that follow the rules should get approved every time.

Council Member Warren Gubler pointed out his flexibility. He may come into a meeting wanting to vote a certain way, "but I can be persuaded by a good argument." He added, "I have a good dose of common sense. I can look past the window dressing and see the bottom line. And now since I've been on the council for four years, I can claim experience."

Vice Mayor Steve Nelsen said he is the first and only council member on both the Gang Task Force Committee and the North Visalia Advisory Committee. As far as voting, "I do my own due diligence and I listen to the city staff. I reach out to people in the industry who know more than I do." He said in terms of voting, "I have no agenda, the citizens make my agenda and I'm not afraid to stand my ground. I am at the will of the people."

Collins outlined his differences more clearly during the LWV forum. "The current council, we probably agree 90% of the time. Here is where I disagree. I've been the strongest advocate for infill. I've been the only one discouraging growth out on Highway 99 and Caldwell. The current council is not heading down that road. I've been the only one advocating to preserve the agriculture land at the end of the airport runway. I am the only one to advocate infill on Mooney. The current council wished to go down to Liberty Avenue. Those are major differences. One model you get a Fresno or Bakersfield, and the other you get the city of Visalia." He finished with saying that the good decisions made in the past are what make Visalia great today.

Visalia City Council candidates (l-r): Greg Collins, Steve Nelsen, Warren Gubler, Vincent Salinas and Michael Brown.

Candidate Michael Brown said he was young, competent and experienced. "I would like to see more diversity on the council such as more young people. We have different issues, such as jobs and issues of our generation." The biggest difference Brown has with the city is the general plan. "I don't agree with the direction the city council is going. I would advocate for a more European model and revitalize the downtown area." Brown describes himself as a Libertarian in terms of business. "I'm a strong believer in the constitution and for first amendment rights. Communities can regulate themselves as far as signage." Brown is opposed to the sign ordinance and believes the new cart ordinance violates the homeless' constitutional rights.

While Gubler, Nelsen and Salinas said they almost always oppose new taxes, and Brown straddled the fence, Collins took a more philosophical approach. "What does Visalia want to be? Do they want to be a progressive community that has nice amenities unlike any other community? That costs money, and do they want to tax themselves to get those types of amenities? Or do they want to be average? He also added during the chamber of commerce forum about taxes, "We are good today, but check with me next year."

Brown also voiced a different view on how to raise city revenue. "I do not support a sales tax. We can develop revenues in a hotel tax because our tourism is going strong. We need to increase our vibrant culture and art to attract more tourists. We need to keep taxes low but have an attractive community." Brown also advocated for developer impact fees.

Gubler said flatly, "We are taxed enough. We need to give the private sector time to recover from the recession. As more houses are built and more commercial centers are built those fees will come in."

"I took a stand against the sales tax measure. Thank goodness the Blue Ribbon Committee agreed with me," said Nelsen. "I have too many people with their hand in my pocket. Some I know, some I don't know, and I don't think the city needs to be another one." Nelsen said he would almost always be opposed to raising taxes unless the voters told him to raise them.

When asked at the chamber event under what condition he would raise taxes, Salinas said, "That's a tough question because I'm against taxes." In regards to Measure T and Measure R, which were both taxes, and have helped hire more police and build roads, "In hindsight, I'm glad they passed."

The chamber is giving each candidate a scorecard based on their performance, but here are my preliminary results. Vincent Salinas wins for longevity, with his family arriving in Visalia in 1872. Warren Gubler wins for first and most campaign signs and Steve Nelsen wins for best hair. Michael Brown wins for the only candidate who can speak for the youth of Visalia. But Greg Collins would win several awards, such as distinguishing himself from the other candidates and the most complex mix of conservative and liberal. But what I enjoyed most about Collins performance was his use of visual quotes. "One generation plants the trees, the next generation gets the shade," and in his 22 years, he has planted a lot of trees.

So who would I vote for? I can't vote. I live in Lemon Cove, where a Sikh who uses a putter as a walking stick is our honorary mayor.

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Governor Brown Signs Bill to Create Snoopy License Plate

STAFF REPORTS

On Saturday, October 5, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed Assembly Bill 482, "California Cultural and Historical Endowment," by Assembly Member Toni G. Atkins (D-San Diego). The bill moves the California Cultural and Historical Endowment (CCHE) from the State Library to the Natural Resources Agency and lays the foundation to launch a Snoopy special interest license plate to support California museums.

Each special license plate will feature a reproduction of an original Snoopy drawing by Charles Schulz, doing a happy dance (probably in anticipation of suppertime). The proceeds from sales of the Snoopy license plates will establish a competitive grant program to support our state's great museums.

"The grant money will be given out in a competitive grant process," California Association of Museums (CAM) Executive Director Celeste DeWald told the Voice. "Every museum in your local area will be able to apply. Any kind of museum can apply, including art museums, historical museums, aquariums and children's museums."

The license plates are expected to generate $5 million in revenue for museums, according to DeWald.

The campaign to put the beloved, comic beagle on license plates in California, and help the state's museums at the same time, has been underway for several years. More than 10,000 Californians have already expressed interest in purchasing a Snoopy special interest license plate by completing an online form. A statewide marketing campaign will be launched soon to pre-sell Snoopy license plates and the Department of Motor Vehicles will begin issuing the plates upon receipt of 7,500 paid applications.

California is home to a great variety of museums – from world-renowned destinations to small museums that preserve the unique histories and culture of the state. The Snoopy license plate will generate new funding to help support California museums without relying on the State's limited resources.

Jean Schulz, the widow of Peanuts cartoonist Charles Schulz and founder of the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center in Santa Rosa, the Charles M. Schulz Creative Associates and Peanuts Worldwide, the licensing agent for PEANUTS, are giving royalty-free rights to CAM to establish a special license plate featuring Snoopy.

Snoopy shows off new license plate design.

California drivers may currently register interest for a Snoopy license plate at www.snoopyplate.com. The state will soon begin collecting the appropriate fee from drivers who want their own Snoopy plate (starting at $50). Once 7,500 individuals pre-purchase a plate, the DMV will begin production.

Plate revenues will support a competitive grant program that benefits California museums. CCHE, a state entity, will administer the California Museum Grant Program with funds raised from the Snoopy license plates. A smaller portion of the revenues will support professional development programs and services.

CAM is a non-profit service organization formed to represent the interests of California museums. CAM assists California museums in fulfilling their missions as educational and research institutions that interpret and preserve art and cultural and scientific artifacts for public benefit. www.calmuseums.org.

Trauma Conference Set for November 7

STAFF REPORTS

The Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) is sponsoring the 8th Annual Cynthia Lockhart Mummery Conference on Thursday, November 7, at the Visalia Holiday Inn. The conference, "Shattered – From Tragedy to Triumph, Creating Trauma-Informed Communities" will feature Dr. Lisa Conradi from Rady Childrens' Hospital, San Diego, and Sharon and Mia Behrens, formally from Hanford. Dr. Conradi is the project manager for a nationwide effort to train on trauma screening, assessment and treatment.

Mia Behrens was the subject of a CBS Evening News feature in 2007 and several books by Dr. Lenore Terr on trauma and children. Sharon Behrens, Mia's adoptive mother, presents with Mia, now a college student, on "healing circles." The two presented to the National Pediatric Society's annual conference.

Registration for this event is available until October 30. The cost is $50 for the all-day event, including materials and lunch. Six continuing education units are available for an additional cost of $25.

"This is an opportunity for anyone working with children, parents, foster parents, students and program staff to receive training that will promote better strategies for dealing with children who have experienced trauma," said Marilyn Barr, executive director of CASA Tulare County, and a major supporter of the Child Abuse Prevention Council.

For further information or to receive a registration form, call the Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council at 735-0456.

Steve Nelsen
For City Council 2013

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My vision as a member of the City Council is to sustain the momentum we have achieved in the past four years. We have reduced costs to our homeowners where possible and challenged those that sought to increase fees or charges. We strengthened our police and fire departments via several pathways to better protect our citizens and their property. We have added businesses via the major commercial centers in Visalia which adds sales tax to our general fund which reduces the need to tax our citizens. All this makes our city stronger and more vibrant. That's the type of momentum I want to sustain.

Red Ribbon Week Celebration Fights Youth Drug and Alcohol Use

STAFF REPORTS

The Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency and Tulare County Office of Education are taking a stand against alcohol and drug use during Red Ribbon Week by hosting the 4th annual Red Ribbon Week Celebration on October 26 from noon to 4 p.m. at the International Agri-Center, 4500 S. Laspina St., Tulare. Students and their families are invited to attend the free event featuring urban graffiti artist Eric Gonzales along with other local performers, games, hands-on activities, and snacks.

"Families are encouraged to visit the Red Ribbon Event with their student," said County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "We hope visitors will come away from the event with the courage and resources to stay drug and alcohol-free."

Community businesses, residents, educators and organizations are encouraged to take up the theme "A Healthy Me Is Drug-Free" and promote drug-free lifestyles while collaborating on vocal and visible efforts toward achieving a drug-free community.

Red Ribbon Week was established by the United States Congress to commemorate Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent Enrique S. "Kiki" Camarena. After serving in the military, Camarena became a police officer aspiring to work for the DEA. Amid protests from family, he declared, "I am only one person, but I want to make a difference." he was hired on with the DEA as an undercover agent in Mexico investigating drug cartels. On February 7, 1985, Officer Camarena was abducted and subsequently killed by drug traffickers.

His friends and family members wore badges of red cloth to honor him, and anti- drug coalitions began to form and take his story as motivation that one person can make a difference. Red Ribbon Week is now a nationally recognized weeklong event, taking place October 23-31 to promote and celebrate a sober and healthy lifestyle. The Tulare County Red Ribbon Week Committee is a collaboration of community partners including the County of Tulare and Tulare County Office of Education. Visit www.redribbon.org for more information and to take the Red Ribbon pledge to help children grow up safe, healthy and drug-free.

Local Volunteers Sought for 'Make a Difference Day'

The largest national day of community service is once again being celebrated in Visalia, as Make A Difference Day will be recognized on October 26.

Driven on the national level by USA Weekend and Points of Light, and brought locally to the community by the City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department and the Urban Tree Foundation, Make A Difference Day is seeking volunteers for multiple revitalization projects throughout Visalia.

The list of city projects includes:

- Planting 600 trees and 75 shrubs at St. John's River (along Santa Fe Road)
- Spreading chip at Sunset Park
- Replacing blue fescue with lirope at Riverway Sports Park
- Adding multiple trees throughout Plaza Park
- Painting arbor and benches at Community Campus
- Painting block wall at Twin Homes on Houston between Garden and Harold

Make A Difference Day connects people with opportunities to serve, increases the strength of communities and promotes civic engagement. Through Make a Difference Day, the city of Visalia is joining hundreds of other organizations in the state and around the country. Over 150 volunteers are needed to complete all of the 2013 Make A Difference projects throughout Visalia. Individuals, families, service clubs, businesses, agencies and faith-based organizations are all welcome.

To sign up as a volunteer for Make A Difference Day, call Melissa Tracy at 713-4384 or visit www.liveandplayvisalia.com and check "Upcoming Events." You can also follow the conversation Twitter and Facebook with the hashtag # mdday13.

A Solution to the Homeless Problem -- Improving the Oval

CATHERINE DOE

In the ongoing discussion about finding solutions to the city's homeless problem, the Visalia City Council held a work session last week about making improvements to Lincoln Oval Park. The five candidates running for city council also let their opinions be known about the Oval and the homeless issue in both the Visalia Chamber of Commerce and League of Women Voters candidate's forums.

North Visalia residents and businesses around the Oval, along with the city, have been in discussions over the past five years about how to improve the area. This is Visalia's oldest district and is steeped in history.

Commuting every day from Goshen around the turn of the century, two of my great aunts attended Visalia's first high school, located where the park is today, and tied up their horse and buggy on the hitching posts behind the school. After the location was no longer used as a place of education the school was torn down and Lincoln Oval Park was built. Visalia is not alone in the fact that its oldest district is now a hot spot for illegal activity and transients. Many cities in the United States and Europe face the same problem and it takes an extraordinary level of commitment by all parties concerned to rid these historic districts of crime.

Working to make this park a source of city pride started with the North Side Advisory Committee (NVAC), made up of neighbors, businesses, police and a city council member, Steve Nelsen. The idea surfaced to completely demolish the park, a sentiment echoed in some comments to the Visalia Times-Delta, and then implement a complete redesign. In the end, it was decided that building off the park's existing amenities would be more cost-effective, using grants, donations and the city's California Development Block Grants (CDBG).

The NVAC took more than 20 ideas and narrowed them down to five priorities that they felt would make the park a place where families would feel safe bringing their children, picnicking or attending events. The city owns Lincoln Oval Park so the NVAC had to first get the approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission. The commission approved their plan in August.

At the October 7 city council meeting, Vincent Elizondo, of the Parks and Recreation Commission, presented the following five suggested improvements:

1. Install a new park playground, shade cover and ground cover. The current playground is about 20 years old and out of state compliance. It is scheduled to be removed in the near future. Estimated cost is $155,000.

2. Install new sidewalk to create a walking path around the perimeter of the park. Estimated cost is $80,000.

3. Install four new park security lights and park cameras. The additional lighting would help the Visalia Police Department to visually inspect the park, and the cameras would put additional eyes on the park during certain hours of operation. The security cameras have been highly successful at the city's skate park. In addition to the CIP costs, there are also monthly maintenance fees for the cameras of $1,200 per month. Estimated cost is $120,000.

4. Improve the small amphitheater north of the Oval Service Center with a shade cover and install additional electrical improvements for outdoor special events and performances. Estimated cost is $140,000.

5. Install 3-4' high black wrought iron fencing around the east side of the park, adjacent to Highway 63, for safety purposes. The idea is to direct walking and bike traffic to the pedestrian crosswalks. Part of the project would include additional irrigation improvements to plant red roses in a new small planter area between the new fence and the street curb. Estimated cost $60,000.

Council Member Bob Link started off the discussion by saying that he didn't see the point of putting in a new playground until the park is completely cleaned up. "I don't want to put money into it until then," he said. He also wants to wait and see how successful the shopping cart ordinance is and how the Visalia Rescue Mission plan works to change the park's environment by bringing in activities and events to the little amphitheater.

Council Member Greg Collins felt the same as Link. He was not supportive of doing all the renovations at once or spending the money and then have a failed system. "I want to wait and see." Collins felt that if we can create the momentum for positive change, and the number of homeless goes down, then he would weigh the possibility of spending money. "I grew up down the street from the Oval. There has been a huge evolution, and not for the better," he said. "I do not want to spend a tremendous amount of money on the Oval when can you walk a half a block down the street and it looks like a war zone."

Vice Mayor Steve Nelsen, who is on the NVAC, said that he has been working on this issue for the four years he has been on the council. He was very supportive of pursuing money sources to improve the park, especially for the lights and cameras. "That could bring a big change in the element that comes to the park." But he didn't understand why the playground was their number one priority seeing as there is no parking and no one is going to take their kids to a park where there is drug dealing and prostitution. He expressed the desire to see the changes that the lights, cameras and shopping cart ordinance do first. "I disagree with Greg though; it's not a warzone."

Mayor Amy Shuklian was clearly agitated by the attitude of her fellow council members and voiced her frustration. "The Oval has been put on the back burner for years, even more so than the animal shelter. The CDBG just spent $150,000 on a splash pad at Rawhide Stadium but the Oval just gets talked about. We could have done something before it got to the point it is today. It's been neglected for too long."

Nelsen explained that there has been no consensus among the businesses and residents on the north side on what to do about the park. He said that the worst meeting he ever had was with the north side merchants because no one could agree.

Shuklian responded that, "It doesn't matter if there is a consensus. We don't need permission. It is city property. We have not done the basic things for our city park."

Two speakers agreed with Shuklian. Carla Calhoun, a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, said that it is a mistake to wait.

Continued on p. 14 »

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Porterville

Continued from p. 1

of at least three council members to grant a proclamation, alongside stricter time limits for sending requests to the council.

"It's going to take a lot longer to get proclamations now, but that's what we've got to do," said Shelton, during the meeting in which the process was approved.

"I think that it's actually a better process - it does slow it down a little bit, but all it means is that people who are asking, they're going to have to be on their toes and ask a little earlier than normal," Hamilton said.

Previously, a mayor could simply grant proclamations at will. In recent times, mayors have sought to include the signatures of the council on these proclamations as a show of support; one of the points of controversy for the rescinded LGBT Month proclamation was that no council member signed it.

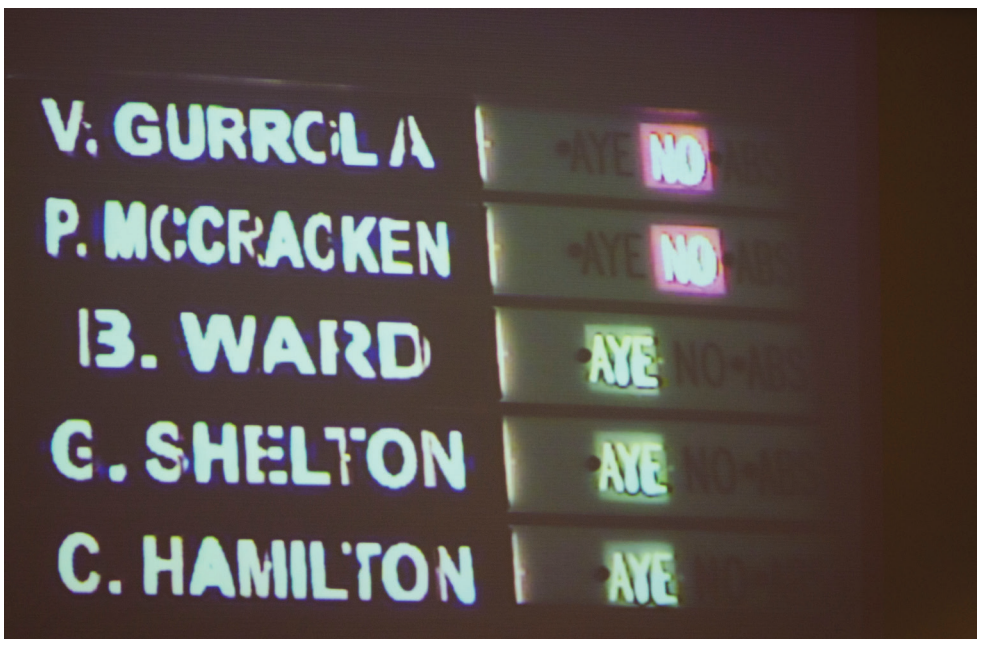
"Before I came on council, the proclamations were just signed by the mayor, and very rarely did the council sign the proclamations," McCracken said. "We did have -- when Ron Irish was mayor, he pretty much instituted the practice of all of us signing on the proclamations, and that became an accepted practice. It was never voted on or discussed by the council, it just happened."

"I just didn't feel comfortable at the time of signing it, especially the procedure that was followed; it was put in late, I didn't feel I had adequate time to read and understand it before it was presented. That's why I didn't sign it."

Council Reorganization

The council, on September 17, voted to rotate the mayoral positions on the council, removing then-mayor Virginia Gurrola and then-vice mayor Pete McCracken on the same 3-2 lines as previous votes.

They were replaced with Cameron Hamilton and Brian Ward, respectively.



Votes on the recent contentious issues often came down to the same 3-2 lines.

Citizens at the meeting took the coincidental timing of the reorganization as a sign that the rotation was not simply to give other council members a chance to serve in mayoral positions, but as a sign of discrimination – either for their voting positions, or something else.

"What bothers you so much about Virginia Gurrola? That she's a woman, that she's a Latina, and that she's strong?" asked Teresa de la Rosa during the meeting.

"Prior to the proclamation, Council Member Ward had already brought up rotation to the city manager to put it on the agenda, and then it kind of got dropped," Hamilton said. "After the proclamation, he said he wanted it on the agenda, and so his request looks like it's in correlation to the proclamation."

"I can guarantee you the proclamation was not why he called for the reorganization."

"I think that Councilman Ward might have brought it up in June or July, had not the proclamation come forward. I don't think it would have happened at that time," McCracken told the *Voice*. "Subsequent to the proclamation, my viewpoint is that Ward held off until he thought the furor had died down, and I question whether anybody really believes it was strictly rotation."

Coming Out Day Proclamation

At its Tuesday, October 1 meeting, the Porterville City Council summarily rejected a proclamation that would mark Thursday, October 11 as National Coming Out Day, on a 3-1 vote; Shelton, Hamilton and Ward against, McCracken for. Council Member Gurrola was unable to attend the meeting.

"I was in hopes, but not high, [that they would accept the proclamation] because I figured that's exactly what they'd do. They performed exactly to expectations," said John Coffee.

"There are a lot of good people in this town, and unfortunately the extremely vocal, extreme minority are the ones that are being heard from. At some point, in my opinion, the 'good people' will rise up and the scoundrels - and I include, at least in my opinion, Hamilton, Ward and Shelton - they'll be dealt with. I have every confidence in the world that if good, qualified candidates come forward, they will prevail."

The proclamation was rejected, according to members, on the grounds that it was not inclusive of the entire community.

"I'm not seeing it being for everybody," Shelton said during the meeting.

"It's hard for me to understand how they want to identify themselves by one identifier," Hamilton told the *Voice*.

Neeley said that he will continue to push the council on LGBT issues — he plans to bring forward a World AIDS Day proclamation in the near future.

Looking Forward

"I really want to get over this, because we need to move on," Gurrola said. "I need to be focused on how we can stimulate our economy."

The community has seen a new boon in the newly-opened South County Justice Center Courthouse, she said. The courthouse replaces an older one that was often crowded and required residents to travel to Visalia's courthouse for jury duty and other matters.

In addition, the city hopes for an expansion of Walmart, currently mired in a lawsuit.

"There's an economic boom just waiting for the lawsuit to get over with Walmart - once that's landed, we will see that entire area grow with the type of retail and eateries that the citizens have been crying for forever," Hamilton said. "We want to have competition, because it's good for everybody."

"We're open for business, and we're a very caring community, and want to work on stimulating our economy," Gurrola said.

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Two home communities at Ridge Creek Golf Club will be under construction next year.

Home Construction Planned at Ridge Creek

STAFF REPORTS

The long-awaited development of custom and semi-custom homes at Ridge Creek Golf Club in Dinuba is moving forward, with construction expected to begin in the fall of 2014.

The Dinuba City Council approved the site map and took its first look at initial renderings and floor plans developed by Visalia architect Stan Canby of Teter AE. The homes will reflect the Craftsman-style architecture of the Ridge Creek Golf Club clubhouse.

The Golf Estates at Ridge Creek will be a gated community with 55 custom homes, on lots ranging from 10,000 to 26,000 square feet. Homebuyers can have Canby design their home, or choose their own architect.

The Golf Villas at Ridge Creek will feature 115 semi-custom homes ranging in size from 1,780 to 3,400 square feet. Homebuyers will be able to choose from eight different floor plans for the homes, starting in the high $200s to the $400s. A design studio will be created to allow homebuyers to select their materials and personalize their home.

All home and home site buyers will receive a one-year family membership to the golf club.

Mark Davis, managing partner of Ridge Creek Partners, has partnered with homebuilder Ted Intravia of TTI Development, Los Banos. Dinuba Realtors Merlo Newton Real Estate will handle sales, and the preferred lender is Country Club Mortgage, Reedley.

The Homes of Ridge Creek will be developed in four phases, Davis noted, and a boutique hotel and recreation center are proposed to complete the development.

"The homes have been envisioned by the City of Dinuba since the beginning, as a complement to the Ridge Creek Golf Club," Davis said. "The recession delayed the project but we feel the time is right now. Dinuba is growing and there are no homes like this in the greater Dinuba area. The golf club has a great reputation and we will build on that."

An Important Election: School Board

CRAIG WHEATON, ED.D., SUPERINTENDENT

If you haven't already voted by mail, Election Day is coming up on Tuesday, November 5. There are always important topics on the ballot, and in this case, there are opportunities to elect Visalia City Council members as well as four members of the Visalia Unified School District Board of Trustees.

Dr. Craig Wheaton

Now you are going to say that I am biased, but I really believe that this is a very important election, selecting local school board members. This is our opportunity, by electing school board members, to set the direction of the school district for years to come. Since there are four of the seven school board members up for election, this is the once-every-eight-years chance to elect the majority to the board.

Also, this election is monumental because it completes a transition started several years ago from a school board that was elected by the community "at-large" representing five areas in the school district, to electing members from seven areas in what is called "By Trustee" area elections. This simply means that the district is divided into seven areas and trustees must live in and be elected by voters in that area.

The election this year completes the work of the Trustee Area Boundary Committee, first formed in 2009, to review the law, develop guidelines, and make recommendations. These guidelines were adopted by our school board and assisted them in drawing and adopting new trustee areas in 2011. The first three "By Trustee" area board members were elected under this system in 2011.

If you live in the following elementary school attendance areas, you may have a chance to cast a ballot for your representative to the local school board:

- Area 1 (Manuel F. Hernandez, Veva Blunt and Willow Glen)
- Area 2 (Elbow Creek, Four Creeks, Golden Oak and Ivanhoe)
- Area 3 (Annie R. Mitchell, Mineral King and Pinkham)
- Area 4 (Goshen, Hurley, Oak Grove and Shannon Ranch

So, make your vote count and select the person you believe will best serve the children of our community!

Halloween Spooktacular
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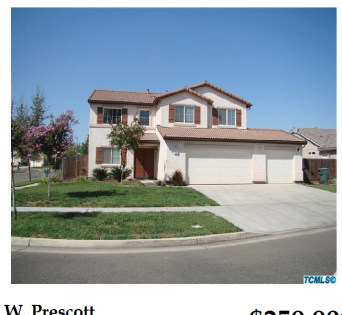

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MAJOR ISSUES:
Smart Growth - Visalia can continue to become a sprawling city like Las Vegas or Fresno; or Visalia can embrace a different growth strategy which embraces public transportation, a vibrant downtown, and the community feel which makes Visalia special. I will work to retain the character of Visalia, and grow Visalia in a responsible way. I am the most qualified candidate to solve Visalia's critical water and energy issues.
Vibrant Economy - If Visalia's citizens want their sons and daughters to live and work in Visalia; we must cure our unemployment and underemployment problems! I would work tirelessly to bring industry leaders to Visalia and to make Visalia a place business leaders want to set down roots.
Community representation - The Citizens of Visalia want to know their constitutional rights will be protected and we will continue to live in a free society. I am the candidate who will work to make this happen. I will work with all diverse communities to make sure you have a real voice in the decisions of the City.
Background - I received an Industrial Engineering Degree from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. I also spent 7 months studying Spanish in Spain. I worked as an Applications Engineer in Mountain View, California helping hi-tech companies invent new products. I also worked for 6 years at Pacific Gas & Electric Company in various project management roles on large energy and water projects during the day. I worked my way through law school at night at the University of San Francisco School of Law. I now work as an attorney and an energy & water consultant in Visalia.
I have worked with many California cities, counties, state agencies, and federal agencies. I have seen what works and what doesn't. I believe I am the best qualified candidate even though I would be the newest member of the council. Visit me on facebook to support me or see my campaign materials!

News in Brief...

SINCLAIR GROUP CLOSES ON ACQUISITION OF KMPH, KFRE

Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc. announced that it has closed on its previously announced acquisition of the stock and broadcast assets of four television stations owned by TTBG LLC ("Titan"), including KMPH and KFRE in Fresno, for an aggregate purchase price of $115.35 million. Sinclair also assumed Titan's agreements to provide sales and other services to two other stations, KXVO in Omaha and KMEG in Sioux City, Iowa.

Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., the largest and one of the most diversified television broadcasting companies in the U.S., will own and operate, program or provide sales services to 162 television stations in 77 markets. Sinclair's television group will reach approximately 38.7% of U.S. television households and will be affiliated with all major networks. Sinclair's television portfolio will include 38 FOX, 29 ABC, 26 CBS, 25 CW, 22 MNT,15 NBC, 5 Univision, one Azteca and one independent station.

TULARE COUNTY APPOINTS HR/DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors appointed Rhonda Sjostrom as county human resources and development director.

Sjostrom has worked for Tulare County for more than 26 years, where she has held management positions with the County Administrative Office and Human Resources & Development. She served as assistant human resources director since September 2009.

As the new human resources and development director, some of Sjostrom's duties include: providing overall administrative and program direction in various human resources areas; recommending to the board of supervisors and/or County Administrative Office proposed policies, rules and procedures; preparing, presenting, and administering department budgets; managing various employee benefit programs; and overseeing employee relations functions.

Sjostrom earned a degree in mass communication and journalism, with an emphasis in public relations, from California State University, Fresno in 1983. She started her new position on October 7, with an annual salary of $127,000.

Sjostrom replaced Jeff Cardell, who resigned in July to take a position with the city of Fresno.

CONWAY PATIENT PRIVACY BILL SIGNED INTO LAW

Californians signing up for health care coverage through the state will have greater confidence that their personal information will be protected under new legislation signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown. The measure, Assembly Bill 1428 by Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, will require state health benefits exchange workers and contractors who have access to sensitive personal information to undergo federally required background checks. The measure takes effect immediately.

"Californians have enough to worry about when it comes to selecting their health insurance," said Conway. "They shouldn't also have concerns that buying insurance will put them at risk for identity theft. I appreciate Governor Brown's signing of this important consumer safety legislation,"

On October 1, millions of Californians began signing up for health insurance through the state's health benefits exchange, Covered California. Covered California is hiring thousands of workers to sign people up for health care coverage and many of these positions will be filled by temporary workers. These workers will have access to information such as: home addresses; Social Security numbers; state and federal tax information; and personal health history information.

'PART-TIME PAYS' JOB FAIR SET FOR OCT. 26

The Visalia Campus of Brandman University and Central Valley Women's Network will host a free "Part-Time Pays" job fair on October 26 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. This job fair is designed to help jobseekers promote themselves and their potential to employers who are looking to expand their businesses.

Employers will include home-based businesses, temporary agencies and other local employers. It is recommended that attendees come prepared and bring resumes. Employers interested in attending the event to meet potential employees and collect resumes should contact Brandman University.

In conjunction with the job fair, Central Valley Women's Network will also host a "Boo"tique "where the shopping will be so good it's scary!" Families are welcome, and a kid-friendly costume contest will take place at 11 a.m.

Both events will take place at Brandman University Visalia Campus, 649 S. County Center Drive (at Noble), Visalia. For more information, contact Alex at 636-5595 or ahamilto@brandman.edu.

COS AWARDED STUDENT RESEARCH GRANT

College of the Sequoias has been notified by the U.S. Department of Education that it will be awarded a 2013-16 Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Grant (MSEIP). The three-year, $750,000 grant will support the creation of the COS Science Undergraduate Research Group Experience (SURGE), which is designed to increase access to higher mathematics, to expose students to undergraduate research and to enhance the culture of inquiry in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines.

One of the goals of this grant is to have COS SURGE students present their research at national and regional science conferences. SURGE will work with our other science student support services to promote student transfers to research universities.

This grant was developed by professor Dr. Larry Owens, PASEO lead Charles Rush, MESA advisor Duane Goodwin and Dr. Robert Urtecho, dean of math, engineering and natural and social sciences.

WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITY AWARDS' APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Soroptimist International of Visalia, a service organization dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls, announced that applications are available for the annual "Women's Opportunity Awards."

This unique program offers cash grants of $1,000-$3,000 to deserving Visalia area women. A woman is eligible if she: Is the primary provider for herself and her family; she is attending an undergraduate degree program or a vocational skills training program; and she demonstrates financial need. Unlike traditional scholarships, these funds may be used for anything that will assist the woman in pursuing her educational or training goals, including tuition, educational materials, child care or household expenses.

Applications and additional details about the award are accessible online at www.sivisalia.org. The application deadline is December 15, and the awards will be presented at a recognition dinner in January. For more information, call Jody Gilman at 972-5280

VWR DISTRIBUTION CENTER RECEIVES CERTIFICATION

VWR International, LLC, a global solutions provider of laboratory supplies, equipment and services, has received LEED Silver Certification from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) for its West Coast Distribution Center located in Visalia.

(Logo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20101109/NY97837LOGO)

VWR received the certification for sustainability throughout the planning, design and construction of its Visalia facility. As a result, the location met the set level of criteria outlined by the USGBC to receive Silver Certification.

TULARE FACILITY TO BENEFIT FROM KLOECKNER CONSOLIDATIONS

Kloeckner Metals, one of the leading metal distributors in North America, announced that it is reorganizing and consolidating a number of facilities under its Kloeckner Metals brand. The company will install new plate processing equipment at its Tulare location to accommodate the business currently processed at its Oakland location, which is scheduled to close.

Kloeckner Metals will also close its facilities in Portland and Los Angeles.

Prisons

Continued from p. 1

After a high-profile battle in federal court, watched closely by states' rights advocates, a three-judge special panel convened to hear the case ruled that healthcare in the state's prisons, whose inmate populations at times exceeded 200 percent of their designed capacity, failed to meet constitutional standards and had resulted in an extraordinarily high number of deaths among inmates.

The court took its reasoning a step further and found that overcrowding itself was the root cause as the healthcare system had become hopelessly overburdened. The three judges removed control of the prison system from the state and appointed a medical receiver to oversee a rapid modernization of the prison healthcare system at each of the state's sprawling prisons. A modernization that has seen the receiver order the expenditure of well over $1 billion of California's money on things such as new prison hospitals and increased and better paid staffing for prison clinics,

The judges ordered the state to reduce the inmate population to a figure not to exceed 137.5 percent of the prison system's designed capacity, a figure that the state has called arbitrary and meaningless. The current inmate population is at 146.9 percent of capacity, or about 8,000 inmates over the cap imposed by the judges.

Meanwhile, attorneys for Brown have continued to fight and lose, suffering setback after setback all the way up to, and including, an appeal to the nation's highest court. Brown's string of adverse rulings in the courts had continued virtually uninterrupted until the recent ruling by the three-judge panel extending the Dec. deadline until Jan. 27.

To avoid further inflaming the situation, the state has temporarily halted the return of the out-of-state inmates as it tries to develop a plan for housing them in private prisons throughout California and avoid adding them to the over-crowded prisons.

In the past month, CCA and the Geo Group have each announced the signing of new contracts with the state for housing thousands of inmates, though it still isn't clear whether inmates covered under those new contracts will be housed in privately owned facilities within the state or in private out-of-state facilities where the per-inmate cost is significantly less than in California with its high cost of living.

Politics makes for strange bedfellows, or so the saying goes. As the third-term governor gears up for a previously declared run at a fourth term in the governor's chair, he met recently in Sacramento with legislators from the state's oft-maligned minority caucus and came away smiling with new allies in support of his proposal for a $315 million temporary fix to the prisons problem; a bill which would earmark the funds specifically for prison-expansion purposes.

The Republican lawmakers are historically tightfisted pertaining to issues requiring the expenditure of taxpayer dollars, but they were all smiles in announcing their party's support for a new idea and plan proposed by an old, longtime adversary.

California's Republican Party has long been a vocal supporter of expanding the number of prisons to accommodate the rapid growth in the state's prison population. Each of California's 32 prisons has an annual operating budget of about $50 million.

Brown said if the money is approved, the state will "expeditiously" begin leasing privately owned and operated prison cells both in and out of the state, as well as leasing unused jail space in cities up and down the state. Brown has also announced plans to reopen the state-financed Community Correctional Facilities located in the cities of Taft, Shafter, Delano and Coalinga.

Each of the 500+ bed facilities was shuttered several years ago when Brown's public safety realignment plan (AB 109) rerouted the low-level inmates who formerly served their sentences in the minimum security CCFs back to jails in the communities from which they were sentenced. Reopening each of the facilities would also provide a much-needed economic boost to each of the host communities.

Coalinga shuttered its Claremont Facility two years ago when a contract with the state to house inmates there was terminated by the state in yet another round of cost cutting moves. The facility had provided 90 jobs with an annual payroll of $5 million for members of the surrounding community. Now the city is stuck with an estimated annual tab of $200,000 simply to maintain the closed facility.

How soon the facilities will be reopened is anybody's guess, said state officials. If the court grants a further extension for the state, state officials will move quickly to reopen the local facilities in order to house lower-level inmates returning from out-of-state.

On the other hand, if California receives no further extensions from the court, state officials say much of the $315 million will be used to pull out all the stops and shuffle inmates quickly to out-of-state prisons in order to avoid having to release an additional 8,000 inmates to meet the court's demands for a population which does not exceed 137.5 percent of capacity.

While the governor refuses to entertain thoughts of any plan which has as a component even the slightest of early release possibilities many of the state's most populated counties have been forced to wholeheartedly embrace early releases from their own jails which have been overrun with realignment inmates. Lawbreakers who are sentenced in Los Angeles County can expect to do no more than about 40 percent of their sentences before being kicked loose.

Brown recently announced that plans to close the California Rehabilitation Center in Norco have been put on hold indefinitely. That dilapidated facility, made famous in the Eagles' song "Hotel California," was built up over time around a once-opulent former resort/spa and hotel seized for back taxes by the federal government and leased to the state to use as a drug treatment facility. Eagles drummer, singer and songwriter Don Henley served an enforced stint at the state-run rehab in the late 60's.

Los Angeles County officials have announced a three-year deal with the state to send 528 of the county's low-level inmates to state owned and operated fire camps. In return, the county will pay the state $27 million over the life of the three-year deal.

Tulare County officials are moving forward with plans to construct a new $80 million jail in Porterville, as well as an additional new facility, The South County Daytime Reporting Center, also to be located in Porterville that will handle the growing number of south county residents sentenced to serve their days in the custody of the sheriff's department while returning home each evening to spend their nights with families. Currently the program's participants from the south county area must make a daily drive to Visalia in order to participate in the Daytime Reporting program.

We're certainly pouring some long overdue attention into the long-neglected south county area," said sheriff's Captain Keith Douglass, who heads up the Detention Division for the sheriff's dept. "A lot of our resources and attention are being invested right here in this area."

According to Douglass, the Daytime Reporting Center will be constructed with some of the $8 million in realignment funds the sheriff's department has received from Sacramento for the 2013-2014 year. The center will include classrooms as well, allowing those in the program a chance to attend alcohol, substance abuse or continuing education courses while serving their sentences. Douglass expects to have the program up and operational by mid to late January.

The ever changing winds of AB 109 policy and rapidly evolving directional changes have taught Tulare County officials, as well as their counterparts throughout the state, much about waiting patiently while hoping for the best when dealing with issues related to AB 109.

All eyes have turned to the federal appeals court from which a decision is expected to come possibly as soon as the end of the month.

Douglass said the county is applying for an additional up to $40 million in state funds to replace some of the aging buildings at the old road campsite. In addition to constructing transitional housing units for prisoners in the jail's substance abuse program, Douglass said a mix of classrooms and programming areas will allow prisoners to educate and better themselves during their stay in the jail.

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Gubler

Continued from p. 1

In fact, it was Gubler who last year suggested the formation of the Blue Ribbon Committee which took to the citizenry to investigate the popularity of a fractional sales tax increase. Unless the Visalia City Council declared, by a unanimous vote, a fiscal emergency, any sales tax hike put to the public in an election year would have had to pass by a two-thirds majority vote. While disliking tax bumps, Gubler recognized that, if needed, an increase was not likely to pass in these lingering hard times. He therefore suggested the formation of a committee to look into both the necessity of a tax adjustment and the feasibility of its passage. In an off-cycle year such as this one, the vote required to pass a tax increase would be 50 percent, plus one. And, after months of conferring with the public, the Blue Ribbon Committee found no cause to adjust the sales tax rate. Gubler counts this as a success.

"I have a record of which I am proud," he said. "The city council has re-zoned and revitalized Mooney Boulevard, balanced the city budget in tough times and generated surpluses the last two years...all this with no tax increases."

Gubler is optimistic about Visalia's future. In particular, he cites a "booming" Industrial Park. "It's filling up," he said. He also points to an upgrade in the city's water conservation plant. At an estimated cost of over $140 million, the plant will use recycled water to meet the irrigation needs of crops, Plaza Park and the Valley Oaks Golf Course. And because of this conservation, the Tulare Irrigation District has offered Visalia 15,000 extra acre-feet of water annually. According to Gubler, this is a "win-win."

Also slated for the future is an improvement of the Lovers Lane/Highway 198 interchange. The city aims to broaden the angles of the on and off-ramps to alleviate the traffic congestion which typically pools beneath the overpass.

Visalia has also bought the dirt parking lot used by the flea market, along with some 800 surrounding acres, and when the final necessary 40 acres are purchased, the city plans to construct another highway overpass on the site. Furthermore, the city will install ponding basins and a sports park there.

Gubler looks forward to the completion of this and other projects, such as a new 911/Emergency operations center, a new fire station in southwest Visalia, and a new animal control facility. Regarding the General Plan Update, in advocating smart growth Gubler would like to see responsible triggers guide Visalia's concentric expansion.

"I'm gung ho on Visalia's future. During the recession, we tightened the city's financial belt and practiced the basics of good city governance," he said. "With the end of the recession, Visalia's economy is starting to rev up again, and I predict that Visalia will be one of the economic stars of California. The city council should continue to take the lead in promoting Visalia as a destination."

Homeless

Continued from p. 9

It takes many things to change an environment. Approving the proposal may attract new businesses to the area and create some synergy. Calhoun explained that we shouldn't lose the momentum. Many people have been working on this and "we should take advantage of the opportunity."

Ryan Stillwater, events coordinator for the VRM, feels that the Oval is a viable place right now and that we shouldn't wait. He said that right now three thousand people can attend a ticketed event at the Oval. "At what point does it become viable? I just want to go back to the residents and property owners and tell them someone cares."

During the two forums last week, city council candidates had a chance to elaborate on their ideas about how to clean up the Oval and what they would do about the homeless. Although there are homeless and transients all over Visalia, the discussion focused on North Visalia. Collins introduced a concept advocated by homeless activists in Fresno. "Maybe we can designate an area, I think Soroptimist Park for example," he said. "We fence it so they are secure. We provide Porta Potties so they have a place to go to the bathroom. We provide water so they have fresh water to drink. That would allow us to provide some services that would enhance their quality of life and then you begin to work with them on an individual basis."

This concept is new for Visalia but already in practice in other cities, such as Olympia, Washington; Eugene, Oregon; and Ventura. A human rights group in Portland, Oregon, Right to Dream Too, has set up a similar homeless camp on city-owned property, and their city council is currently debating making it permanent. Advantages of such camps are many. Couples and families can stay together, there is no drug and alcohol testing, and no requirement to attend a religious service. Another big advantage is that the homeless do not have to pack up and leave every day. The Visalia Rescue Mission does not have the resources to accommodate couples or families nor do they have the beds to accommodate the more than 700 homeless in Visalia.

Council candidate Vincent Salinas reminded the audience during the League of Women Voter's forum that it is written in Visalia's charter that, "the city is to provide for the care of the indigent." He also took issue with the city putting in $6 million into an animal shelter. "We need to be as compassionate about human beings as we are about animals."

Council candidate Michael Brown said that the homeless can make people feel uncomfortable going downtown. "I believe we need a more comprehensive solution to the homeless problem. We need to move the services away from the downtown." He also does not agree with the shopping cart ordinance.

Nelsen also asked the audience, "Please don't give money to the homeless and don't give them food. Tell them where to go so their needs can be identified." Once the homeless get to the Visalia Rescue Mission for a meal, it could be the first step into getting back into life and off the streets. "I don't want them out of sight, out of mind," said Nelsen.

At the end of the work session, the city council put off a vote approving the five proposed improvements to the park. They did authorize staff to bring them cost estimates for putting up security lights and cameras, a tactic that made a huge difference when installed at Recreation Park and the skate park. They also asked for cost estimates on putting up fencing along Highway 63.

Besides the North Visalia Advisory Committee proposal, two major improvements are in the works or already completed. The city just demolished the Oval's public bathrooms that were the focal point of illegal activity. Also, the Lincoln Oval Street Improvement Project, a capital investment of $850,000, is set to begin construction in the summer of 2014.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor of the Valley Voice,

Once again, right-wing lawmakers in Congress have shown how disconnected they are from the needs of people in Tulare County. From forcing our nation into a federal government shutdown, engaging in futile votes to defund the Affordable Care Act, and approaching the debt ceiling deadline that's just a week away, right-wing lawmakers are lurching from one manufactured crisis after another instead of addressing the issues ordinary people care about such as jobs, access to vital services and an economy that works for all.

Make no mistake, the sole responsibility for any potential shutdown rests with House of Representatives leadership beholden to the radical right-wing, who insist on trying to take away healthcare for millions, slash retirement benefits, and more. This is the same recklessness from Congress that gave us the Sequester, which has cost jobs and halted our nation's economy.

Compounding the Sequester and making matters even worse is the federal government shutdown. Since October 1st, thousands of Americans have been furloughed, subjected to pay cuts and dropped from federal unemployment benefits. Millions of others have been hurt by aimless cuts to vital services, including Head Start, education, healthcare, food and nutrition programs, mental health services, child care, public housing and special education.

If the House's proposed funding levels were enacted in 2014, $1.8 billion would be cut from Head Start, costing roughly 240,000 children access to early childhood education services. The impact of these cuts will only get worse if the House continues to pass piecemeal spending bills that keep select parts of the government open. It's time for the House to end the era of irresponsible budget cutting and work to pass a clean compromise continuing resolution.

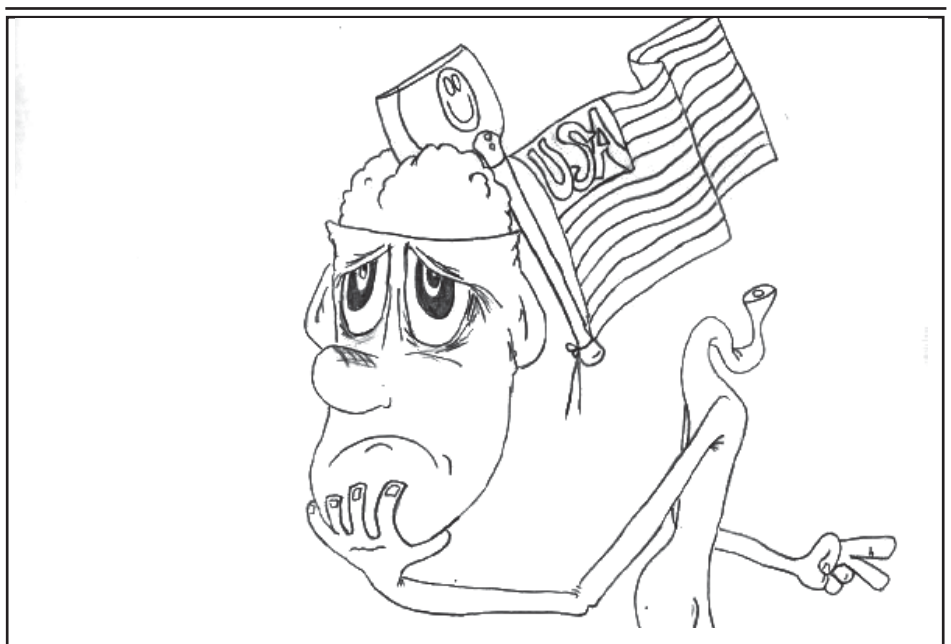
Responsible leaders in both parties must stand up to this nonsense and return to an era of responsible governing-passing a responsible budget, asking those who can afford it to pay their fair share, giving Americans access to the vital services they need to support their families and children's future, and passing a clean debt ceiling increase. Americans and people in Tulare County want to get back to work in good jobs that can support their families.

Teneya Johnson
Visalia, CA

Editor's response: *Thank you for your letter. In addition to your letter, we have received others that we were unable to print in this edition due to size constraints. To find the other letters expressing the concerns of our readers, you can go to www.ourvalleyvoice.com and click on 'Opinion.'*

Black Tie

ALEX



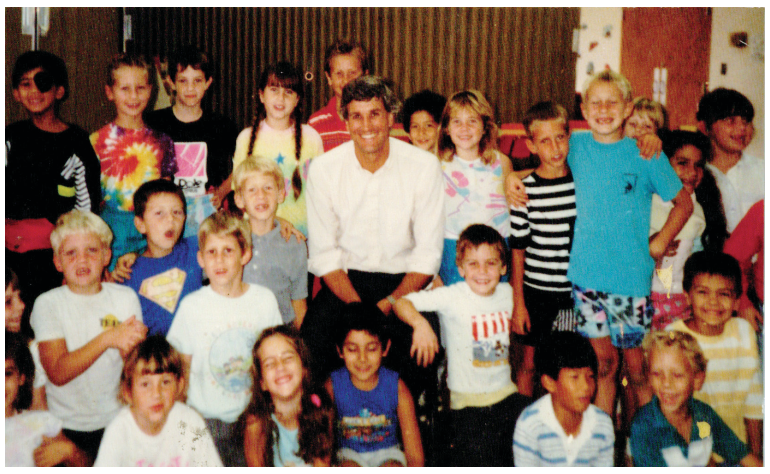
Happy Halloween from the Tea Party.

SHARE YOUR OPINION WITH US

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Greg Collins for Visalia City Council

... planning for the next generation



"One generation plants the tree and the other gets the shade"

Serving this community has given me great joy and I'm grateful to Visalians who have entrusted me with the responsibility of helping to guide the city for 22 years! I look forward to the numerous challenges and opportunities Visalia and the city council will face in the future. I hope you'll vote for me in the upcoming city council election so together we can ensure that Visalia continues to be the "Jewel of the Valley."

We need to:

- Invest in public safety to keep our citizens safe
- Solve our groundwater overdraft problem
- Preserve the agricultural land that surrounds Visalia
- Continue to pump life into our one-of-kind downtown
- Discourage sprawl and promote urban infill and concentric growth
- Work on resolving the homeless issue in Visalia
- Work with the Oval and Washington neighborhood groups and families to support their efforts to revitalize the areas through providing better lighting, more aggressive code enforcement and public safety involvement

Contributions: Greg Collins for Visalia City Council
1002 West Main Street, Visalia, CA 93291
Contact: (559) 281-1160; greg@weplancities.com
For Signs: e-mail your address to greg@weplancities.com

Are you a wartime veteran or surviving spouse?

Veterans Aid

YOU OR YOUR SURVIVING SPOUSE MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS AID AND ATTENDANCE BENEFITS.

Did you or a spouse serve our country during a period of war? If so, the Veterans Administration wants you to know about a little-known program that will provide **up to $2,054** per month TAX FREE to help pay for home health care, assisted living, or nursing home expenses.

Even if your duty did not include combat, your service may make you eligible.

The good news is that the surviving spouses of wartime veterans are also eligible for benefits that can pay **up to $1,113** per month for care.

For complete details and to RSVP, please call our director of community relations at (559) 624-3500.

EVENT DETAILS
THURSDAY, NOV 14 | 6:00–7:30 PM
SATURDAY, NOV 16 | 10:00–11:30 AM
Speaker:
Gilbert Fleming, VA Accredited Attorney

The Central Valley's PEOPLE'S CHOICE Awards 2012 The Fresno Bee

Quail Park RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Quail Park Retirement Village
4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia

CALL FOR CARE AND SERVICE OPTIONS
(559) 624-3500

FREE apple pie and ice cream to all veterans.

Affiliated with
Kaweah Delta Health Care District
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www.quailparkofvisalia.com

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From left to right: Mary T. Hill, Terry Culotta, Blayne Hammond

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Valley Voice
Valley Scene

"Club Ghoul" features Bethany Owen as Elvira.

'Club Ghoul' to Haunt Visalia Fox Theatre on October 30

"Club Ghoul and the Monsters Ball," a ghoulish Halloween stage show of music, magic and comedy, will take over the Visalia Fox Theatre on October 30. The 7:30 p.m. performance includes wardrobe, sets, props and special magic and illusion effects designed specifically for the show.

The show stars its co-creator Bethany Owen, a Las Vegas headliner and celebrity voice and character impressionist, who brings her tribute to the macabre and zany hostess "Elvira." She will also sing and dance to many of the greatest Halloween monster hits from beyond the grave, including "The Monster Mash," "Witchy Woman" and "Wild Thing," as well as a Halloween parody rendition of Madonna's mega-hit "Vogue."

There will also be a variety of spooky comedic routines, audience musical interaction segments and a few magical production numbers as only the campy and electrifying "Elvira" could perform them.

Also featured in the show are magicians and illusionists, coupled with the sound and lookalike tribute performers ranging from "Alice Cooper" to "Ozzy Osbourne." Highlighting the full production numbers are live recreations of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" and Prince's "Bat Dance," all supported by the beautiful and mysterious Black Widow Dancers.

The $25 admission includes a beverage, and costume contest. For tickets or more information, call 625-1369 or visit www.FoxVisalia.org.

Vince Gill to Headline Visalia Fox

Vince Gill

One of the most popular and most recorded singers of the past quarter-century, superstar Vince Gill will perform at the Visalia Fox Theatre on Friday, November 1.

Gill achieved his big breakthrough with "When I Call Your Name," which won the Country Music Association's Single of the Year award. Since then, he has won 17 more CMA honors, including Song of the Year four times – making him the most-awarded artist in that category in CMA history. The Academy of Country Music has handed him eight awards, including its prestigious Home Depot Humanitarian Award and the Career Achievement Award. Since 1990, he has received 20 Grammy Awards and sold more than 26 million albums.

Gill was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2007. He is also a member of the Grand Ole Opry. In August 2012, he was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. His high, pure tenor voice and unerring sense of harmony have inspired dozens of artists – from Reba McEntire to Dolly Parton to Barbra Streisand – to embrace him as a duet partner.

Vincent Grant Gill was born April 12, 1957, in Norman, Oklahoma, and raised in Oklahoma City. His father encouraged him to learn to play guitar and banjo, which he did, eventually adding bass, mandolin, dobro and fiddle to his instrumental array. After working more than 30 years as a professional musician, he established himself as one of the most successful guitarists of his generation. Combining a deep knowledge of Americana, bluegrass and classic country with the fire of '60s rock, he has earned a place next to his musical heroes.

Nowadays, those same heroes he listened to while growing-up, have become fans, colleagues and friends. Having performed at all four of Eric Clapton's Crossroads Guitar Festival benefits, Gill has become the torchbearer for classic country guitar. Over the years, he has played with everyone from Clapton, Sting and Paul Simon, to blues phenom Joe Bonamassa and legendary songwriter James Taylor. Gill has developed a sound on the guitar that can slip in and out of a song effortlessly and with grace.

In addition to his passion for music, Gill donates a great deal of his time supporting numerous charitable organizations. He is one of country music's most active and effective humanitarians. A sports enthusiast, he is an avid golfer; in 1993 he helped create the annual Vince Gill Pro-Celebrity Invitational Golf Tournament ("The Vinny") which has raised in excess of $5 million to help support junior golf programs throughout Tennessee.

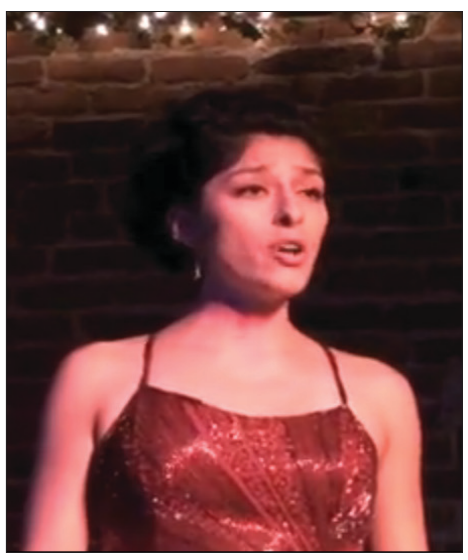
Visalia Opera Company Seeks to Change Your Mind about Opera

APRIL HEATH PASTIS

Rosalinda Verde, director of the Visalia Opera Company, wants to change the way you think about the opera.

It's not a stuffy, highbrow evening with a large female singer wearing a horned helmet belting out something in a foreign language, while tuxedo-clad husbands snore out loud from their velvet-lined chairs.

While you weren't looking, opera has changed and Verde is hoping to change public perceptions with the November 8-10 production of "The Marriage of Figaro" ("Le Nozze di Figaro"). She's bringing Mozart, the maestro himself, back from the dead to explain in English the nuances of his comedic, outrageous sex opera. A casual glance at the plot – adultery, sexual jealousy, crossdressing, gossiping maidens – could easily be mistaken for an episode of Jerry Springer. But these suspicious husbands and wronged wives do more than point fingers and wag tongues; they deliver some of the greatest arias in opera history.



Rosalinda Verde

"The first time the performers heard it, they gave Mozart a standing ovation. They knew it was a hit," Verde said. The story is as valid today as it was back in the 1700s, Verde says. In addition to the assistance of Mozart, subtitles will make sure you won't miss a single juicy nuance of the comedic drama.

To help spread the word about the Visalia Opera Company – and to raise much needed funds – a "Notable Night" fundraiser will be held October 27 at The Lakes Clubhouse. In addition to performances by the cast of "The Marriage of Figaro," there will be exhibits by local artists from the Arts Consortium, a ballet company, a raffle and a silent auction.

The Visalia Opera Company's "Hansel and Gretel" library tour.

Only in its second year, the Visalia Opera Company has already received world-class notoriety which helped it net baritone Zachary Gordin of Oakland, who will play the role of Count Almaviva. Gordin is not only known for his gorgeous voice but has also been named one of opera's "barihunks" and winner of an "Operagasm" award. Like we said, opera has changed.

Taking on a project as intense as "The Marriage of Figaro" would make

Continued on p. 24 »

Los Lobos to Headline Nov. 8 Benefit Concert

Los Lobos will perform a Benefit for Youth Concert, sponsored by the Folklorico Legacy Foundation, at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave., Visalia, on Friday, November 8. The Forty Fours will open the show.

A rare example of longevity in a volatile music world that stresses style over substance, Los Lobos' lineup has remained uninterrupted since 1984, when saxophonist/keyboardist Steve Berlin joined original members Louie Pérez, David Hidalgo, Cesar Rosas and Conrad Lozano, each of whom had been there since the beginning in 1973.

It was during their earliest years that the particular hybrid of traditional regional Mexican folk music, rock and roll, blues, R&B, country and other genres began finding a sweet spot in the music of Los Lobos. "In 1973, when we first formed," said Pérez, "we were four guys from East L.A. who were friends from high school who played in local rock bands. Then once we got out of high school, you still had four guys who were just hanging out together. You'd think that we'd form a rock band but then out of nowhere somebody got this idea of 'Let's learn a Mexican song to play for somebody's mom for their birthday or something.' Mexican music was largely just wallpaper for us – it was always in the background, and we never paid much attention to it. We were modern kids who listened to rock and roll. Then when we finally dug up some old records to learn a couple of songs, that was a real revelation to us that this music is actually very complicated and challenging. So at that point we were off and running."

Los Lobos

By 1980, they began to turn up the volume, returning to rock music. At first, acceptance was evasive – especially at one notorious gig, Los Lobos was rejected by a hostile hometown crowd while opening for John Lydon's post-Sex Pistols band, Public Image Ltd. Before long though, Los Lobos had begun to build an audience within L.A.'s punk and roots-rock world. An opening slot for hometown rock heroes the Blasters at the Sunset Strip's legendary Whisky A-Go-Go in 1982 was a breakthrough, and that band's saxophonist Steve Berlin took a special interest in Lobos, joining the group full-time for 1984's critically acclaimed Slash Records debut, "How Will the Wolf Survive?"

In 1987, they were tapped to cover "La Bamba," the Mexican folk standard that had been transformed into a rock and roll classic in 1958 when it was recorded by the ill-fated 17-year-old Ritchie Valens. Valens, the first Chicano rock star, was catapulted to legendary status the following year when he died in a plane crash along with Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper. When Los Lobos was asked to remake his signature hit for the forthcoming biopic of the same name, little did anyone suspect that the remake would spring to number one on the charts. "We had met Ritchie's family and they had asked for us," said Pérez.

Suddenly, Los Lobos was reaching a vastly larger audience. "We were opening up for bands like U2 and the Clash and traveling around the world," said Lozano. "You'd walk into an airplane and some little kid would be singing 'La Bamba.' It was a great time."

General admission tickets are $25, preferred seating is $45. For tickets or more information, call 713-4040 or visit www.visaliatix.com.

Kiesling Extends Symphony Contract

Bruce Kiesling, music director of the Tulare County Symphony, has extended his contract with the orchestra through 2018. He recently began his fifth season with the symphony.

Kiesling's diverse musical background includes conducting, harpsichord performance, theater and piano work in both classical and popular genres. His training includes degrees from the University of Michigan, the North Carolina School of the Arts and the University of Miami, Florida.

Before coming to California, he was resident conductor of the Greensboro Symphony and music director of the Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra in North Carolina. Besides conducting the Tulare County Symphony, he directs the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (YOLA), in partnership with the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra. YOLA performs at the Walt Disney Concert Hall and this summer included 550 students.

Kiesling also was recently named assistant conductor of the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra.

He is working on the score for an independent film called "Samuel's Game," a dramatic thriller made by a good friend, which was filmed in New York City earlier this year.

Last summer, the Tulare County Symphony did a show at the Visalia Fox Theatre with The Airborne Toxic Event, which was well received. The group is one of Kiesling's favorite indie bands. When he heard they were performing with the Pacific Symphony in Orange County, one of the top California orchestras, he found that they needed a conductor for the performance and was selected. He has conducted in the country's most storied halls, including the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall and the Hollywood Bowl.

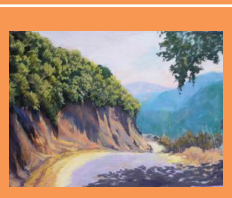
Bruce Kiesling

During his tenure with the Tulare County Symphony, Kiesling has seen ticket sales increase to record levels, and his insider stories and previews have become popular additions to the concerts.

A movie buff, he added movie themed concerts to the Tulare County season. The symphony will perform live music while the film "Casablanca" is played on the big screen at the Visalia Fox on March 15, 2014.

Have a meeting? Need a room?

Why not come to the Courthouse Gallery and Exeter Historical Museum, where there is a meeting room for most types of events?
With room for nearly 100 people, the conference room upstairs has kitchen facilities and a panoramic view. Need more room? Expand into the patio downstairs.
Located in the old Mt. Whitney Light and Power building, the Courthouse Gallery & Museum now showcases the best artists of the area. Come visit the gallery and museum and stay a while in historic Exeter, Tulare County's Mural City.



The Courthouse Gallery & Museum
125 South "B" Street
Exeter, California 93221
(559) 592-5900

www.exeterhistoricalmuseum.com
Saturdays & Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Utopia: Dystopia at COS

The College of the Sequoias Art Gallery will present "Utopia: Dystopia," featuring "Nor Only Tears Rained At Their Eyes" by Aaron S. Coleman, through October 25. The gallery is located in Kaweah Building Room 214 on the COS campus at 915 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia. Hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursdays.

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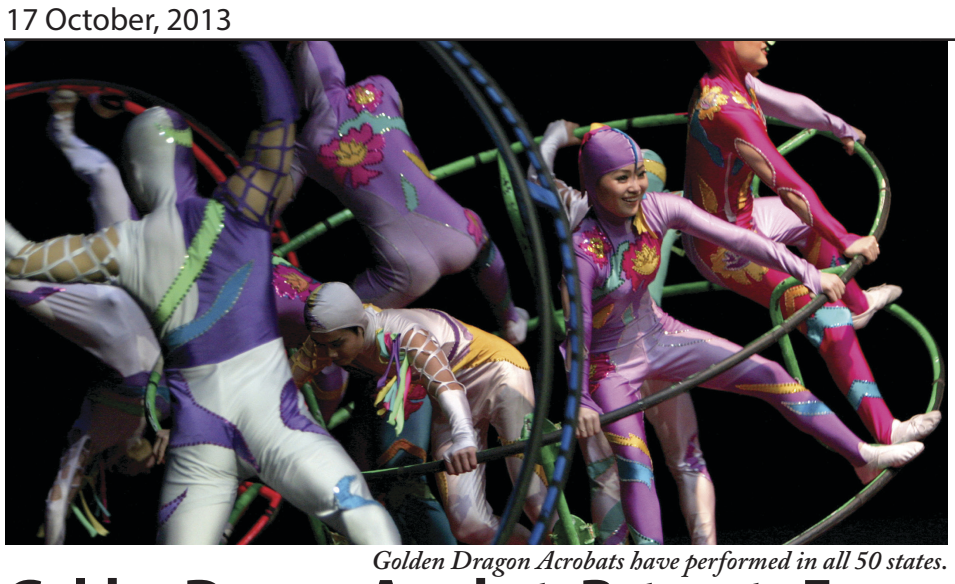


Golden Dragon Acrobats have performed in all 50 states.

Golden Dragon Acrobats Return to Fox Hanford Theatre on October 26

Golden Dragon Acrobats will bring a Chinese cultural tradition back to the Fox Hanford Theatre stage for a 2 p.m. matinee performance on Saturday, October 26.

Chinese acrobatics were among the country's early art forms, a favorite art of the people in China. Even though acrobatics were recorded in history as far back as 4,000 years ago, it wasn't until 2,500 years ago that they gained popularity among the emperors.

Records of acrobatics can be found from the Warring States Period (475–221 BC) on the utensils and carvings on tombs, stones, bricks and temples. By the time of the Han Dynasty (221 BC –220 AD), acrobatics had developed more content and variety, and were nicknamed "the hundred tricks." Over the centuries, acrobatics had a strong influence on other forms of performance art: dance, opera, wushu and even sports.

Today, acrobatics serve an important role as part of the culture exchange between China and other Western nations. Acrobatic art portrays the hard work, endurance and courage emphasized in Chinese culture.

The Golden Dragon Acrobats represent the best of this time-honored tradition, recognized throughout the U.S. and abroad as the premiere Chinese acrobatic touring company today. World-renowned impresario Danny Chang and choreographer Angela Chang combine award-winning acrobatics, traditional dance, spectacular costumes, ancient and contemporary music, and theatrical techniques to present a show of breathtaking skill and spellbinding beauty.

The Golden Dragons have traveled around the world to all 50 states and to over 65 countries on five continents. The members of the current touring company, hailing from Henan and Hebei, China, have performed in all 48 lower U.S. states within the last five years alone, to sold-out audiences in nearly every major market in the country. The Golden Dragons remain the only Chinese acrobatic company touring year-round in the United States.

In November 2005, the Golden Dragon Acrobats made their Broadway debut to a sold-out audience at the New Victory Theater. Their Broadway run over the following six weeks led to standing ovations from audiences of all ages and critical acclaim from the New York press. The run was highlighted by the Golden Dragons receiving two most prestigious New York Drama Desk nominations – Danny Chang for Unique Theatrical Experience and Angela Chang for Best Choreography.

Tickets are $25 for adults, $10 for children. For tickets or more information, call the box office at 583-7823 or visit www.foxhanford.com

El Dia de Los Muertos to be Celebrated at Garden Plaza on October 26

El Dia de Los Muertos includes Aztec traditions.

The Tulare County League of Mexican-American Women will host its 4th annual El Dia de Los Muertos celebration at Garden Plaza on Main Street in Downtown Visalia on Saturday, October 26, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

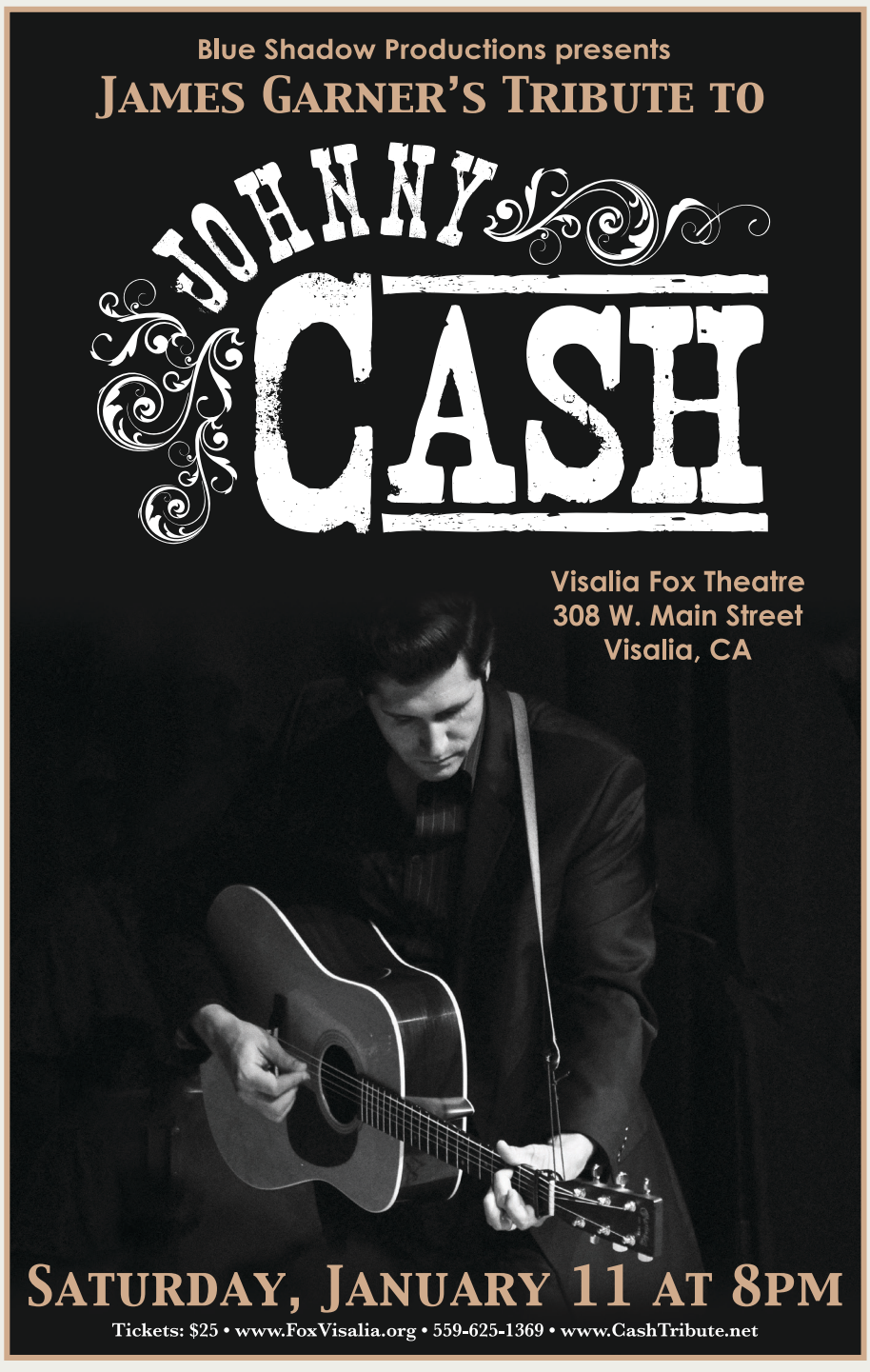
A traditional Aztec blessing will start the celebration, and be followed by music, folkloric dancers and other local talent. The event will feature vendor and food booths, as well as a free arts and crafts booth for children of all ages.

Traditionally, the observance begins on November 1 and is called El Dia de Los Inocentes or El Dia de Los Angelitos (Day of the Innocents or Day of the Little Angels). The day is a time to remember the children who are thought to go directly to heaven.

The purpose of this free event is to expose and promote cultural tradition. Families and members of the community are invited to create altars for their deceased loved ones.

For more information, call Virginia Arenas at 909-3411.

Costumes add to the celebration.



Budweiser EVENT CALENDAR

MUSIC

October

Oct. 18 – Miner – 9:30 p.m.
Miner will headline this 21+ show at the Cellar Door in downtown Visalia. Joel Adam Russell Band will also perform. A free Taste the Arts afterparty is slated. For more information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

October 19 - Cup of Jazz - 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Cafe 210 will present a Cup of Jazz featuring fresh coffee and jazz at 210 W. Center Ave., Visalia. For information, 739-9010.

Oct. 19 – Triumphant Tchaikovsky! – 7:30 p.m.
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra kicks off its 2013-14 season at the Visalia Fox with a musical visit to Vegas, complete with rhinestones and furs. The concerto includes a stop along Route 66 and a bubbly carbonation of Tchaikovsky's 4th Symphony. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

October 27 – A Notable Night – 5 p.m.
A Notable Night Fundraiser benefiting the Arts Consortium and the Visalia Opera Company will feature ballet and opera performances, a silent auction and live visual art demonstrations. The event will be held at the Lakes Clubhouse, 1605 N. Akers in Visalia. Tickets are $25. For information, visit visaliaoperacompany.org.

November

Nov. 1 – Mary Kay - 7 p.m.
Mavericks Coffee House and Roasting Company, a venue for cowboy music and poetry, will present Mary Kay, multiple award-winning western performer. Tickets $25 at Mavericks, 238 E. Caldwell, Visalia. Seating is limited. For information, 624-1400.

Nov. 1 – Vince Gill – 7:30 p.m.
Visalia Fox Theater and KJUG will present Country music star Vince Gill at The Visalia Fox Theater, 300 W. Main Street, Visalia. The singer, songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist has recorded more than 17 studio albums, sold more than 26 million copies and won 20 Grammys and 18 CMA Awards. Tickets $40-$100. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

Nov. 8-10 – Marriage of Figaro
Visalia Opera Company will present the Marriage of Figaro by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information, visit visaliaoperacompany.org.

Nov. 9 – Joni Morris – 8 p.m.
Joni Morris performs "Legendary Ladies" at the Hanford Fox Theatre, 326 N. Irwin Street, Hanford. Morris performs the songs of such legends as Patsy Cline, Connie Francis, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Dolly Parton, Emmy Lou Harris, and other favorites. For information, visit foxhanford.com.

Nov. 10 – Meat Puppets – 7 p.m.
Meat Puppets with The World Takes, featuring Bonebrake of X and Strangevine will perform an early show at the Cellar Door in Visalia. Tickets for the 21+ event are $10 in advance and $12 at the door. For information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

Nov. 17 – COS Symphonic Band and Sequoias Winds – 4 p.m.
The College of the Sequoia's Symphonic Band and Sequoias Winds will perform a concert in the College of Sequoia's Theater.

Nov. 20 – Obits – 9:30 p.m.
Obits of Sub Pop Records will headline this 21+ show at the Cellar Door in downtown Visalia. Evelyn is also slated. For more information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

Nov. 23 – Celebrate the Harvest – 7:30 p.m.
Thanksgiving is no longer just the beginning of the Christmas season. Tulare County Symphony Orchestra puts the focus on the great American holiday with a choral festival featuring favorite folk songs and hymns, performed by a combined choir. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

December

Dec. 7 – College of the Sequoia's Choral Christmas Concert – 7:30 p.m.
Tickets, $10, will be available at the door or by calling the COS Box Office at 730-3907.

Dec. 11 – Charlie Daniels Band – 7:30 p.m.
No one can fiddle like the famed country music legend Charlie Daniels. The man responsible for "The South's Gonna Do it Again," "Long Haired Country Boy," and his signature song, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," will appear at the Tachi Palace in Lemoore. Tickets go on sale on September 27, for $40, $60 and $85. For information, visit tachipalace.com.

Dec. 14 – Annual Holiday Concert – 3 p.m., 7:30 p.m.
The Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's holiday concert includes more than 200 performers showcasing the talent through Tulare County. This popular holiday event will include two showings at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Visalia Fox Theater, 308 W Main Street, Visalia. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Dec. 16 – COS Music Department Finals Recital - 3 & 7 p.m.
The College of the Sequoias Music Department will hold its Finals Recital at 3 and 7 p.m. in the Sierra Music Building on the Visalia Campus.

See more events online ourvalleyvoice.com

EVENTS

October

Oct. 17-24 – AAUW Semi Annual Book Sale – 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.
American Association of University Women Semi Annual Book Sale will be held daily at Sequoia Mall, Visalia. Hardbacks $2; paperbacks; $1, CD's, DVDs, books on tape, and old records also available. All of the money raised goes toward scholarships for local students.

Oct. 17 – Sweet Nectar Society Ribbon Cutting – 10-10:30 a.m.
The Visalia Chamber will hold a ribbon cutting for the Sweet Nectar Society at the chamber, 220 N. Santa Fe. For information, visit business.visaliachamber.org.

Oct. 17 – 20th Annual Waiters Race Servers – 5-8 p.m.
The Taste the Arts Festival kicks off with the 20th Annual Waiters Race Servers. Local restaurants battle it out for cash prizes and bragging rights. Watch them run the Main Street track carrying full trays of food and beverages. Bring the whole family to enjoy this FREE event. Main Street between Court and Bridge, Downtown Visalia. For information, visit artsconsortium.org.

Oct. 17 – Ruiz 4 Kids Let's Fiesta – 6 p.m.
Ruiz 4 Kids will host its Let's Fiesta Fundraiser which benefits Central Valley children's organizations. The evening will include presentation of the 2013 Danza Award to Marilyn Barr, Executive Director of CASA of Tulare County. Entertainment includes flamenco guitarists and dancers, Keys for Kids Vehicle Giveaway, Casino de la Fiesta performers, tequila tasting, auctions, and Mexican cuisine. The event will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. Tickets, $100. Table sponsorship is available. For information, visit ruiz4kids.org.

Oct. 17 – Dillon Garcia – 7 & 9 p.m.
The comedy of Dillon Garcia will be presented in two shows at the Lamp Liter Inn Bar, 3300 W. Mineral King, Visalia. Tickets for this 21+ show are $10 & $12 available at the Lamp Liter or by calling 732-4511.

Oct. 18 – Diocese of Fresno Convention
The annual conference attracts Catholic educators, Lay Ministers, Catechists, Religious, Clergy, Chaplains, Directors of Religious Education Programs, and Youth Ministers. The event will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. More than 3,000 persons participated in the event in 2012. For information, visit visalia.org.

Oct. 18 – Our Islamic Heritage: Art, Context, and Culture, Part 2 – 7-8 p.m.
Porterville College Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP) will sponsor a presentation by History Professor Jay Hargis at Porterville College Theater. The event is free. For information, visit www.pc.cc.ca.us/CHAP.

Oct. 19 – Fall Garden Tour
A Fall Garden Tour to benefit Sweet Nectar Society, will be hosted by The Gardens at Cal Turf. After the tour, a silent auction, music, hors d'oeuvres and a presentation on the Sweet Nectar Society will be held at The Gardens at Cal Turf, 950 North J Street, Tulare. For information, devon@thegardensatcalturf.com, or visit sweetnectarsociety.org.

Oct. 19 – Annual Raven Festival Business Awards
Judging and awarding of the $250 prize to the best decorated business in Three Rivers will be held. For information, 561-4373.

Oct. 19 – SNHA Owl Prowl
The Sequoia Natural History Association will present Owl Prowl, a search for owls while learning about their natural history at Crescent Meadow at sunset. The program is free. For information, visit Sequoiahistory.org.

Oct. 19 - Raven Myths, Legends and Symbolism – 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Three River's annual Raven Festival continues with a presentation on raven myths, legends and symbolism at the Three Rivers Library. Call (818) 625-7815 for details.

Oct. 19 – Taste the Arts Festival Street Fair – 11-6 p.m.
The 3-day Taste the Arts Festival will end with the Festival Street Fair, offering a full day of activities including displays from local artists, musical entertainment, dance troupes and cultural performers. Workshops and a Farmers Market Fun with Food Sculpture Contest will be held. The Street Fair will be at The Garden Street Plaza and Old Lumber Yard, on Garden Street between Main and Oak Streets in Downtown Visalia.

Oct. 19 – Visalia Rescue Mission Run for Hope – 7 a.m.
A 10K+2 Mile Walk/Run will be held to benefit the Visalia Rescue mission. Both events begin and end in Cutler Park, - 15520 Ivanhoe Drive, Visalia. All pre-registrants receive a free t-shirt and chip-timing. Registration opens at 7 a.m., the 10K Race begins at 8 a.m. the 2 Mile Walk/Run begins at 8:05 a.m. For information and to register visit, runsignup.com/runforhope or Sole 2 Soul Sports in Visalia or Fresno.

Oct. 19 – V Town Derby Dames & Darlings Double Header
The V Town Derby Dames will take on the High Country Mountain Derby and the West Coast Derby Knockouts at Roller Towne in Visalia. Tickets $10 in advance, $12 at the door. Children, 10 and under are free. For information, visit vtownderbydames.com.

Oct. 19 – Lindsay Police Department Canine Benefit Dinner – 5 p.m.
A Casino Night to benefit the Lindsay Police Department Canine Unit will be held at Lindsay Wellness Center, 860 Sequoia, Lindsay. Tickets cost $100 and will include dinner for two, $100 in playing casino chips, and entry into a reverse drawing. The 200th ticket drawn awards $1,000 cash. Only 200 tickets will be sold. For information, call Lt. Bryan Clower at 562-2511.

Oct. 19 – Taste of Slam – 7-10 p.m.
The Loud Mouth Poetry Jam will present a Taste of Slam, a free Spoken Word Competition as a part of the Taste the Arts Festival. Listen to local poets and cheer for your favorite performance to cast your vote. The Slam is free and will be hosted at the Arts Consortium, My Voice Media Center: 400 N. Church St. in Downtown Visalia.

Oct. 19 – Silent Movie Night – 7:30 p.m.
An evening of classic silent films with live organ at the Hanford Fox Theatre, 326 N. Irwin Street, Hanford. Tickets $10; student/senior/military $5.00 discount. Call box office for discount. Verification required upon entry. 584-7423. For information, visit foxhanford.com.

Oct. 20 – Menudo Cook-Off – 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
The Tulare County League of Mexican American Women will hold a Menudo Cook-Off for local restaurants to compete for the title of Best Menudo in Tulare County and cash prizes. Other activities include Mariachi music and performances and a cooking demonstration. The community is invited to judge and vote. The event at Recreation Park in Visalia is free, however tasting is $5.

Oct. 20 – Sukiyaki/Teriyaki Chicken Dinner – 12-5 p.m.
The Visalia Buddhist Church will host a fundraising dinner at the Buddhist Church Annex, 514 Center St., Visalia. Dine in or take out. Cost is $14. For information, 733-3808.

Oct. 20 – Tulare Historical Museum Sunday @ 2 – 2 p.m.
The Tulare Historical Museum Sunday @ 2 program will feature a tribute and gathering of members of the first four year high school class of TWHS in the museum's Heritage Art Gallery. Admission is free and the museum will be open for free from 12:30 -4:00 p.m. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Oct. 22 - The MediCal Provider Seminar
The MediCal Provider Seminar will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visit visalia.org.

Oct. 23 – Arabic & Muslim Life Portrayed in Books & Media.
The Porterville College Muslim Student Association will host a panel discussion in the Porterville College Theater. Admission is free and open to the public.

Oct. 24 – Taste of Porterville
Porterville Chamber of Commerce will present the 14th Annual Business Showcase "Taste of Porterville" trade show and restaurant sampling at the Porterville Fairgrounds. For information, visit portervillechamber.org.

Oct. 24 – Step Up Youth Challenge Summit – 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Tulare County's Step Up Youth Challenge program will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. Middle and high schools from throughout Tulare County have a chance to participate in a program that seeks to decrease gang activity and support positive options for youth. For information, visit www.stepuptc.com.

Oct. 25 – Visalia Chamber Ribbon Cutting Reynoso Handyman Services – 10-10:30 a.m.
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will welcome Reynoso Handyman Services at a ribbon cutting at 245 E. Vine Ave., Visalia. For information, visit business.visaliachamber.org.

Oct. 25-26 – 77th Hour Paranormal Investigation Training
Hanford Carnegie Museum will present the 77th Hour, a fundraising event for the Paranormal Research Society. The sober event is for those over 18 years of age. Tickets $25 in advance and $35 at the door. Space is limited. For information and tickets, call 584-1367.

Oct. 26 – Part-Time Pays Job Fair – 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Brandman University and Central Valley W.O.M.E.N'S Network will host a job fair for those seeking extra income, seasonal or part-time work at the university's Visalia campus, 649 S. County Center Drive. For information, visit centralvalleywomensnetwork.org

Oct. 26 – Golden Dragon Acrobats – 2 p.m.
Exciting acrobats take the stage for a matinee performance at the Fox Hanford Theatre, 326 N. Irwin Street, Hanford. Tickets $25 adults; $10 children. Call box office for tickets, 584-7423. For information, visit foxhanford.com.

Oct. 26 – Celebration of Life: El Dia De Los Muertos – 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Tulare County League of Mexican-American Women will coordinate its 4th annual family cultural event at the Visalia Main Street Garden Plaza. Vendor booths, a free arts and craft booth for children, music, folkloric dancers, a traditional Aztec blessing, and local talent featured. For information contact Virginia Arenas at 909-3411 or arenas48@clearwire.net.

Oct. 26 – Three Rivers Halloween Carnival – 4-8 p.m.
The Three Rivers Union School Halloween Carnival, held every year on the Saturday evening before Halloween, will cap the month of festivities of the Annual Raven Festival, with Raven art and gifts, in addition to a huge selection of other donated items, available at the Pick-A-Prize raffle. For information, 561-4466, or visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

COMMUNITY

October

Oct. 17th – Friends of the Tulare Public Library Meeting – 6 p.m
Consider joining the Friends of the Library. Attend the next meeting in the Tulare Public Library Charter Room.

Oct. 19 – Potluck Raven Feast and Story Night – 6-7:30 p.m.
As part of the month-long Three Rivers Annual Raven Festival, community members and visitors are invited to bring potluck and share their raven stories around a campfire at the Three Rivers Art Center, North Fork Drive. For information, call (818) 625-7815.

Oct. 18 - Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Program Training – 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
The Child Abuse and Neglect (C.A.N.) Prevention Program is seeking volunteers to help make presentations at Tulare County schools. C.A.N. is a classroom-based prevention program designed to help reduce the incidence of neglect, as well as physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The C.A.N. Prevention Program will hold a training session for new volunteers on Oct. 18 at its offices at 7000 Doe Avenue, Building 700 in Visalia. Volunteers interested in attending the training must first complete an application by Oct. 11. The application can be found online at www.tcoe.org/CAN. For information, contact Kathy Johnston, at 651-0130, ext. 3710.

Oct. 19 – 9th Annual Raider Nation Blood Drive 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Former Oakland Raiders Coach Tom Flores and the Tom Flores Youth Foundation are rallying the Central Valley football fans to come out, donate blood, and help children and patients in area hospitals. The drive will be held in 3 locations: Visalia Donor Center, 1515 S. Mooney Blvd, Visalia; Sanger High School, 1045 Bethel Avenue, Sanger; and Jenner Eller Donor Center, 4343 W. Herndon Ave., Fresno. All donors will receive a Commemorative "Just Give, Baby" T-shirt and the opportunity to win football/tailgate-themed prizes including Raiders game tickets. Donors can also purchase autographed copies of Coach Flores' books. Proceeds from the book sales will benefit the Tom Flores Youth Foundation. For information, call Chris Sorensen, Director of Community Relations and Development, 389-5405.

Oct. 21 – Exercise for the Community
Exercise for the Community takes place now through Dec.12 on Mondays- Thursdays from 7-8 a.m. and 8-9 a.m. in Rm. FIT 751 in the Porterville College Fitness Center. Cost is $80 per person. Join at any time. Cost of class is not pro-rated. Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For more information on Community Education Classes call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Oct. 21 – November 14 - Fat Burning 101 – 4:20 p.m.-5:20 p.m.
Porterville College Community will offer a non-credit course Mondays-Thursdays in the campus Fitness Center. Cost is $40 per person. This course is designed to teach members of the community to signal their body to burn fat; lose fat without losing muscle weight; achieve and maintain their healthiest body for life; analyze their ultrasound body composition; lower their risk for heart diseases, stroke and diabetes; and to prepare simple snacks, drinks, and meals for a healthy family. For more information on Community Education Classes, call 791-2492 or visit portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Oct. 24 – Last Thursday Book Club – 6 p.m.
The Last Thursday Book Club of the Tulare Public Library will meet. The book under discussion will be announced. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the library's research and information desk.

Oct. 24 – Understanding Autism – 6:30 p.m.
The Tulare County Office of Education Bright Future Program will discuss autism and the services available at the Tulare County Library, Visalia Branch in the Blue Room. For information, visit the Reference Desk or call 713-2703.

Oct. 25 – Photo, Images and More – 8:30 a.m.
Tulare Public Library computer class will be held. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the library's research and information desk.
Oct. 26th – Sci-Fi Fantasy Club – 1 p.m.
The Sci-Fi Fantasy Club, the Tulare Public Library's newest book discussion group, will meet the last Saturday in Oct. for Ender's Game. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the library's research and information desk.

Oct. 28, 29 – New Jewelry Sale by Masquerade – 7 a.m.-4 p.m.
Kaweah Delta Health Care District Hospital Guild will host a New Jewelry Sale by Masquerade at the Kaweah Delta Medical Center, 400 W. Mineral King, Visalia, in the Mineral King Wing Main Lobby. On Oct. 28, the sale will run from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Oct. 29, it will run from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. All profits from this sale goes toward the purchase of patient care equipment for Kaweah Delta Health Care District. For information, call Donna at 734-3109.

ART

Oct. 1-25 – Utopia : Dystopia
Utopia : Dystopia featuring works by Eric Waterkotte and Nick Potter will be on exhibit at the College of the Sequoias Art Gallery. The COS Art Gallery is free and open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The gallery is located in Kaweah Building, Room 214. For information, call 737-4861.

Oct. 17-19 – Taste The Arts
The annual Taste the Arts presented by the Arts Consortium, the county's nonprofit arts council, celebrates the rich artistic and cultural heritage of the county communities. Scheduled activities allow the community to taste, sample and literally dig into the many vibrant forms of art grown and cultivated right here in our fertile Central Valley. For more information on the 3-day Taste the Arts Festival call the Arts Consortium at 802-3266 or visit, artsconsortium.org.

Oct. 19-20 – Fine Art Workshop from Arts Alliance of Three Rivers – 10- 4 p.m.
The autumn fine art workshop from the Arts Alliance of Three Rivers, "Crinkly Inkly Bookmaking", will be taught by Helen Shafer Garcia, a mixed media artist from the San Diego area. The two-day workshop will be held at the Saint Anthony Retreat in Three Rivers. Participants will explore a special batik-like technique with Masa rice paper to create two extraordinary "inkly crinkly books"—multi-signature, end band, hand bound books. Fee is $210 for Arts Alliance Members, $250 for non-members. Fee includes lunch each day, provided by Saint Anthony Retreat. Download form at artsalliancethreerivers.org

Latin Legends to Appear at Eagle Mountain Casino

Eagle Mountain Casino will host the "Latin Legends" concert – starring Thee Midniters with special guest "Little Willie G," Tierra, Malo, Joe Bataan, Sunny Ozuna, Rene Y Rene, and Aalon – on October 19.

Thee Midniters, an East Los Angeles band in the late 1960s was one of the first to fuse horns into a band, among the first rock acts to openly sing about Chicano themes in songs such as "Chicano Power," and one of the first Chicano rock bands to hit the U.S. charts. In 1965, the band hit the Top 100 with a cover of "Land of a Thousand Dances." Lead singer Little Willie G's soulful Latin interpretation of "The Town I Live" helped make them as popular as The Beatles in East L.A.

Tierra, also an East Los Angeles band, was named "Best R&B Vocal Group" by Billboard magazine and is known for its Latin R&B rhythm with a blend of salsa, rock, pop and jazz. The band's set includes "Zoot Suit Boogie" and their Top 20 hit "Together." Tierra has performed at the American Music Awards and on "American Bandstand," and has been credited with opening doors for both other Latinos and non-Latinos like Arsenio Hall, Sheila E., comedian Paul Rodriguez and Los Lobos.

Malo is a San Francisco-based rock'n'roll group with Latin roots. It is best known for its 1972 Top 20 hit, "Suavecito," which timbale player Richard Bean first wrote as a poem for a girl he went to high school with.

Joe Bataan is a singer/musician from Spanish Harlem, New York City, who combined doo-wop and R&B with Latin music, and is credited with creating Latin Soul music. He began recording in the mid 1960s with Fania Records. The eight albums released with them includes the gold-selling "Riot!" which features the Chicano cult classic "My Cloud." That song and "The Prayer" solidified Bataan as a famed vocalist in the Latin music arena.

Rene Y Rene, which began as a Latin pop duo from Laredo, Texas, were among the first Chicano artists to appear on "American Bandstand" and are Tejano Music Hall of Famers and Tejano Roots Hall of Famers. Surviving member René Ornelas continues performances of their 1960s hits, "Angelito (Little Angel)" and "Lo Mucho Que Te Quiero (The More I Love You)."

Malo will perform at Eagle Mountain.

Sunny Ozuna (lead singer for Sunny & the Sunglows and later known Sunny & the Sunliners) began in 1959 in San Antonio with a blend of rhythm and blues, tejano, blues and mariachi. In 1963, his cover of Little Willie John's "Talk to Me, Talk to Me" put him on several charts. Sunny & The Sunliners are credited as the first Mexican American act to appear nationally on Dick Clark's "American Bandstand." In 2000, the Tejano Music Awards honored Ozuna with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Aalon is a Los Angeles soul group formed by lead singer and guitarist Aalon Butler, who played guitar in the 1970s for Eric Burdon. His Chicano following has made his 1977 song "Rock And Roll Gangster" a cult favorite.

Tickets for the 8 p.m. concert are $30 and $40, and available at www.eaglemtncasino.com or by calling (800) 903-3353.

"Ticket to Ride" features worldwide skiing adventures.

Warren Miller's 'Ticket To Ride' Comes to Visalia

Sequoia Ski Club and the Visalia Education Foundation will present Warren Miller's "Ticket to Ride," the 64th installment of Miller's acclaimed series featuring worldwide skiing adventures.

The film will be screened November 7 at the El Diamante High School Theater, 5100 W. Whitendale Ave., Visalia.

This feature-length film takes filmgoers on an exhilarating voyage to the top of the steepest peaks and to the depths of the freshest powder of Iceland's Troll Peninsula, the Alaskan Tordirillos, Montana's "Big Sky Country" and more. The trams in Switzerland climb to Mt. Eiger, the fishing boats in Norway float to Alesund, and the helicopters in Valdez soar above avalanche debris.

"Ticket To Ride" explores the close relationship between humans and our vast natural environment, as the sport's best skiers and snowboarders take an action-packed journey across the globe to shed light on the significance of being aware of your surroundings. The film is a thrilling view of the world's most dramatic natural wonders that will excite even filmgoers who don't ski.

This screening is exclusive to the area through the sponsorship of Sequoia Ski Club. It is also a fundraiser for the Visalia Education Foundation. Tickets are $10 for adults and $7 for students through grade 12, with proceeds going to Visalia Unified School District. Tickets will be distributed through Sequoia Ski Club members, the Visalia Education Foundation, at the Visalia Unified School District office at 5000 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia, and at G.W. Stewart's Salon and Gift Emporium at 430 S. Church St., Visalia.

Tickets may also be purchased online at the Visalia Education Foundation's web site, www.visaliaedfoundation.org. For more information, contact Sequoia Ski Club President Woody Hogan at wwhiii@hotmail.com, or Barbara Mayeda at 909-1462.

Local Restaurants to Compete in Menudo Cook-Off

The inaugural Menudo Cook-Off will be held at Recreation Park in Visalia on October 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The debate of who offers the best menudo will finally be resolved.

Local restaurants vying for the title and prize money for the best and most delicious menudo in Tulare County include: El Palmar (Lindsay), La Palapa (Visalia), Mikey V's Café (Tulare), Taco Ensenada (Visalia), Taqueria El Mejor (Visalia), Taqueria Ana Maria's (Farmersville) and Taqueria Super Taco (Woodlake/Visalia).

Attendees of the event will get the opportunity to taste menudo from each food booth for a donation of $5 per ticket. For those who would like to order a full bowl (24 oz.) of menudo and watch the performances of mariachis and ballet folklórico, the donation is $10. Those who wish to part take in menudo tasting, while supplies last, will have an opportunity to vote for their favorite.

Fifty percent of the vote will come from the public, and the other 50 percent will be from judges from local community organizations. Guest judges for the event will be Lali Moheno, founder of the Latinas in Business and Professions; Anabel Chavez, board president of the Tulare Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Luis Cobarrivas, board president of Hispanic Leadership Network; Juan M. Hernandez, board vice president of Tulare County Latino Rotary; and Julie Galindo, board secretary of the Tulare County League of Mexican American Women.

Entertainment for the event, sponsored by Southern California Gas Company, will feature local youth group Mariachi Juvenil Nueva Generacion from the Mariachi Legacy Foundation. Mariachi music will also be provided by Mariachi Aguiles del Valle and Mariachi Sol de Oro. Mexican folk dances will be performed by Ballet Folklórico del Lago. In addition, a special performance will feature local musician Cory Torres.

El Mexicano Brand will raffle a large can (6 lb. 12 oz.) of hominy every ten minutes during the event. Additional raffle items include piñatas and Marquez Brothers Menudo that attendees can take home. Also, a demonstration by the Untamed Chief Albert Hernandez on how to make menudo in one hour will begin at noon.

Event sponsors include Southern California Gas Company, Sequoia Beverage, Budweiser, La Preciosa FM92.9, Chavez Insurance, Proteus, El Mexicano, Marquez Brothers International, Valley Business Bank and Nuestro Tiempo Magazine.

The Tulare County League of Mexican American Women is a local community serving charitable non-profit with the purpose of promoting culture and education in Tulare County. For additional information, call Raymond Macareno at 972-7097 or visit www.nuestrotiempo.net.

THEATER

Oct. 17-19 – A Midsummer Night's Dream
The College of the Sequoias Theater Department will present A Midsummer Night's Dream. The shows begin at 7:30 p.m., with two matinee performances scheduled on Oct. 13 and Oct. 19 at 2 p.m. Tickets are $12, $10 for students and seniors. For tickets, call 730-3907. For information, visit costheatre.org.

Oct. 17 – Independent Film Movement Series – Shun Li and the Poet – 6 p.m.
The Tulare County Library's month independent film movement will show Shun Li and the Poet at the Tulare County Library, Visalia Branch in the Blue Room. The movie is in Italian and Mandarin with English subtitles. For information, visit the Reference Desk or call 713-2703.

Oct. 18 – Rocky Horror Show – Midnight
Loosely based on the Frankenstein tale, Rocky Horror Show is about a lonely, transvestite space alien who creates his very own love slave, Rocky. It just goes downhill from there. Admission is free. Donations welcomed. The Lindsay Community Theater is located at 190 N. Elmwood, Lindsay. For information, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.com.

Oct. 18 – Camp Charming - 7 p.m.
The Enchanted Playhouse Theatre Company presents a free performance of this story of two young American boys who set off across the Atlantic to England and an International Preparatory School for Royal Graces to learn the arts of dragon slaying, swordsmanship and saving fair damsels in distress. The performance will be held at Main Street Theatre, 307 E. Main St. Visalia. For information, 739-4600.

Oct. 18-20 – The Gin Game
The Gin Game, a Pulitzer Prize winning tragicomedy, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre at the corner of Race and Santa Fe. Evening performances are at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 18-19 and a matinee will be at 2 p.m. on Oct. 20. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Fisher Combines Recipes, Jokes in 'Wok the Dog'

"Everything in here I've cooked," said Allan Fisher about his recently released fifth book, Wok the Dog. "There's not a recipe in here that I haven't done."

The book, published by Sampson Publishing Company, features recipes for appetizers, beans, beef, breakfast and brunch, desserts, lamb, pasta and rice, pork, poultry, salads, sandwiches, sea food, soups, veal and vegetables. In addition to the 100 recipes, the book features a lot of kitchen humor.

Author and chef Allan Fisher

Fisher is the founder of Mission Care Group, which owns and operates nursing and rehabilitation hospitals in the Valley. He served on the national executive board of the Boy Scouts of America, receiving the organization's highest volunteer award, the Silver Buffalo. He is active in the Rotary Club of Visalia, having served as its president.

"Wok the Dog follows on the heels of Marinate the Cook, which blends many great recipes and jokes," said Fisher. "These books combine my two favorite things in the world to do – cook and tell jokes. There aren't a whole lot of good cook jokes. It's a lot like a good father-in-law joke. When's the last time you heard one of those?"

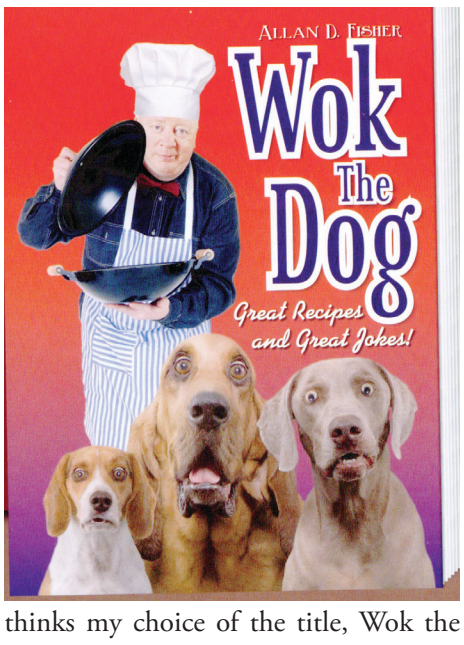
Before writing the book, Fisher went to bookstores to ask women what they wanted to see in a cookbook. "They wanted it to lie flat, have big print and have rings in it," he said, adding that they also wanted a cookbook that "was not all that complex."

As a result, even though Fisher often prepares five-course meals, Wok the Dog focuses on much easier recipes. "I tried to keep it simple," he explained. "I'm not going to spend time explaining how to make ketchup. Hunt's makes a better ketchup than I do.

"I tried in the last book to give the basics – meat loaf, prime rib, that sort of stuff," he said. "In this book, I tried to pick up where I left off, with things like salisbury steak and beef stroganoff. There's more meat and potatoes, and not a lot of sauces. I'm not into creamy sauces and I've never seen the value of pouring stuff over a good steak."

The book also includes two recipes for macaroni and cheese – regular and baked.

"By the way," he added, "my wife



thinks my choice of the title, Wok the Dog, should require me to be placed in a home, but I think it was a brilliant choice. You judge."

Fisher wanted it noted that despite the title, "there are no wok recipes."

For more information, visit www.sampsonbooks.com.

All-Female Led Zeppelin Tribute Band to Play Cellar Door

Lady Zep

Lady Zep, the premiere all-female tribute to the legendary group Led Zeppelin, will perform at The Cellar Door in Downtown Visalia on Saturday, November 2. Established in 2009 and based out of Los Angeles, the band has performed shows across Southern California. The Sunset Strip has been the home of many Lady Zep shows, places that include the House of Blues and the Key Club.

Melissa Jane, Leanne, Miiko, and Marija play the eternal heavy jams of one of the greatest bands of all time, from the first side of "Led Zeppelin I," to the final grooves of "In Through the Out Door." Individually, the band members have performed with musical notables such as Gwen Stefani and Dave Navarro.

Tickets for the 8 p.m. (21+) show are $10. For information about this or other Sound N Vision Foundation shows, visit snvfoundation.org.

Que Pasa offers samples of its cuisine at last year's event.

Tulare Historical Museum to Host Taste Treats in Tulare

The Tulare Historical Museum will offer an opportunity to sample the best foods and beverages in the Valley when it hosts Taste Treats in Tulare at the Heritage Complex International Agri-Center, 4500 S. Laspina St., Tulare, from 6-8:30 p.m. on Monday, October 28.

The 23rd annual event, which also features live and silent auctions, is the museum's biggest fundraiser of the year. Tickets are $50 and include all beverages.

For tickets or more information about this or other museum events, call 686-2074 or visit www.tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Alvarez' Photos on Display

This photograph of the Santa Cruzan Festival in Dumaguete City in the Philippines will be among those by Michael Alvarez of Alvarez Photography, which will be on display at Mike's Quality Camera, 105 E. Main Street, Visalia, on Friday, November 1. The dancers pictured were featured in the festival's parade.

KIDS CALENDAR

Oct. 18 – Civil War Time Travelers
Schools within the Tulure County Office of Education will participate in a Civil War Reenactment at Kearney Park in Fresno. Only a limited number of 5th through 8th Grade classes are eligible. For information, contact Joy Soares at jsoares@ers.tcoe.org or call 651-0501.

Oct. 18 – Planetarium Public Show – 7 p.m.
Experience the creation of the Milky Way Galaxy, and witness the violent death of a star and subsequent birth of a black hole at the Peña Planetarium, 2500 W. Burrel, Visalia. "Black Holes: The Other Side of Infinity" show is open to the public, ages 10 and up. Tickets, $4 adults; $3 Children under 12. Tickets are available between 12-7 p.m. on the day of the show at the Impact Center Office, 2500 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia. Cash or check only. For information, call 737-6334 or visit http://www.tcoe.org/.

Oct. 20-26 – Character Counts Week
During the national Character Counts Week, Tulare County Office of Education will will recognize students with exceptional character. The Provident-Salierno Family Foundation Kids of Character Awards Reception will be held on Oct. 26 at 6 p.m. at Education Center, 2637 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia. For information, contact Kelley Petty at kelleyp@tcoe.org or call 740-4303.

Oct. 22 – Toddler Time – 10-11 a.m.
Every Tuesday, the Tulare County Library, Visalia branch has a special time for toddlers, aged 0-2 years, to play and interact while building literacy skills. For information, visit tularecountylibrary.org/storytime.html.

Oct. 22 – TCSO Youth Concerts – 9 a.m.
The Tulare County Symphony Orchestra Education Series on divine divas continues at the LJ Theater in Visalia. Additional Concerts held at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. For more information, visit tularecountysymphony.com.

Oct. 23 – Children's Storytime – 10-11 a.m.
Every Wednesday, the Tulare County Library, Visalia branch holds story time in the children's wing. For information, visit tularecountylibrary.org/storytime.html.

Opera

Continued from p. 17

any director think twice, let alone that this fledgling company.

"There's a lot of sleepless nights, but I imagine all directors go through that," Verde said.

Zachary Gordin

A lot of people wonder why a rural community would even have an opera company, she admits, but she is quick to point out that many people don't realize the level of talent available in the Central Valley. "I don't know how to articulate it without also sounding insulting. Some people think Visalia is not ready for it but I don't see it that way at all."

She said that one person recently complained to her that there was nothing to do in Visalia. "That makes me so upset. I mean obviously you need to open your eyes 'cause Visalia has it going on."

Pick any evening and walk down Main Street, she says. She performs every Tuesday and on the weekends at Crawdaddys Visalia and notices that every venue on the block has live music. "There's always something going on," she said, adding it's not just musically. The calendar of the Arts Consortium, their partner, is so full it's difficult to find an open weekend. "The Ice House, Creative Center, The Enchanted Playhouse, Sound N Vision, the Fox, Rawhide… something is always happening."

She points to the operatic talent of the cast – Limuel Forgey as Figaro; Heather Krane as Susanna; Jasmine Swalef as Countess Rosina; and Isabel Contreras as Cherubino – as talent that should not only be heard, but seen. "Opera has a reputation of being stiff, but now it's kind of been infused with the musical Broadway-like world. It's got staging; it's got movement and acting." In addition, Elisha Wilson of the Tulare County Symphony will be the music director and Charlotte Garcia, who produced "Shrek" for the Tulare County Office of Education, will be the stage director. "They're all top notch," Verde said proudly.

"Visalians sometimes don't give themselves credit, but we deserve to have a world class opera company," she insists. "Just look at what Bruce 'Maestro' Keisling, has done with the symphony. The attendance is phenomenal. He's so charming. Isn't it awesome? He turns around and talks with the audience. He makes people feel so comfortable."

Still, Verde recognizes that at a time when other large metropolitan opera companies are facing fiscal hardships, starting an opera company is difficult. Recently, she and a group attended the National Opera Association conference and were unable to find another rural opera company.

"Big cities, yes. Universities, yes. Independent, yes. Rural areas? no. We're the only ones that are doing it," Verde said.

"Why? It's freakin' hard," she said. "I'm losing my hair, and going gray with the financial stuff.

"The arts community here has been very helpful and very generous. The Enchanted Playhouse has been very generous with their theater and letting us perform. Cafe 210, the Arts Consortium, the Symphony, Ice House players, COS – all have been so supportive," Verde says. "I think they recognize the value of what an opera company can do to raise the quality of life here in Visalia because it is really prestigious."

Lim Forgey

Still, while many groups allow Verde to borrow costumes and sets, paying for musicians, stipends for the performers, and other fees have to come from money earned through fundraisers and sponsorships. To do that, she and members of the Visalia Opera Company have been visiting every service organization that will host them.

"We try to go wherever I can ambush people with opera. There have been many occasions where people have been really shocked that they actually liked it. They've come up to us with tears in their eyes. It's been really touching," said Verde. They also go to local restaurants and perform "flash mob" opera.

The Visalia Opera Company is also committed to youth outreach. It's toured Kings County libraries from Kettleman City to Corcoran.

"The children really enjoyed it and the fact that we get to expose young kids to it is our dream," said Verde. "We want people to know opera is fun and, if you want a career as a musician, it's not impossible."

Through the Tulare County Office of Education, the Visalia Opera Company has partnered with the Tulare County Symphony to hold educational concerts at the L.J. Williams Theater, and in Tulare and Porterville.

"Our goal is to reach the youth so that when they become adults they don't scrunch their noses at the idea of opera. They've already seen it, they've already been exposed to it." Verde even dreams of the day when the Visalia Opera Company will have a junior opera company training the youth in the area to bring them up into performing with the opera company.

For tickets or more information on the Notable Night Fundraiser or "The Marriage of Figaro," visit visaliaoperacompany.org.

'Halloween Havoc III' Comes to Eagle Mountain

The Warriors Cage, the extreme Mixed Martial Arts fight series at the Eagle Mountain Casino Event Center, continues with "Halloween Havoc III" at 8 p.m. on October 25. Area fighters will be pitted against each other in the Warrior's Cage.

The Main Event pits two middleweight fighters, John Salter from Fresno, a Brazilian jiu-jitsu fighter representing Dethrone Base Camp, who will battle North Highland's Jaime "El Cucui" Jara, a Brazilian jiu-jitsu fighter representing Carnage Fight Team. The Co-Main Event features Cody "The Renegade" Gibson from Visalia, a jiu-jitsu/muay Thai fighter representing Elite MMA, vs. Chad "The Savage" George from Los Angeles, a striker and jiu-jitsu fighter representing PKG.

"Our main event features two Brazilian jiu-jitsu fighters who should put on a very competitive fight, standing up or on the ground," said Loren Lenares, Warriors Cage promoter. "These two fighters are well conditioned athletes and will be looking to take this fight to the ground and apply joint-locks and chokeholds to submit the other person."

General admission tickets are $25 with reserved at $35. Tickets can be purchased online at www.eaglemtncasino.com or by phone at 1-800-903-3353.